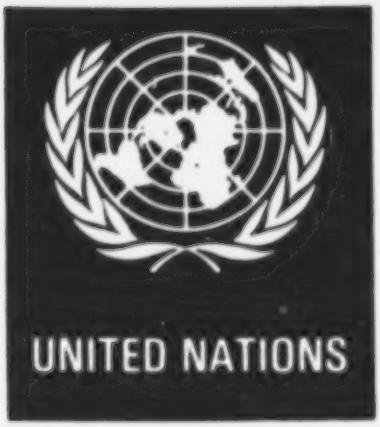

DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

SPECIAL BULLETIN ON THE COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

1992

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CONTENTS

Page

I. **Commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People** 1

II. **Texts of statements made and messages delivered on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, 1992**

Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People	H.E. Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé, Chairman	2
United Nations General Assembly, forty-seventh session	H.E. Mr. Stoyan Ganev, President	3
United Nations Secretariat	H.E. Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General	4
Security Council	H.E. Mr. André Erdös, President of the Security Council for the month of November 1992	5
Palestine	Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, delivered by Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer for Palestine	6
Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories	H.E. Mr. Stanley Kalpagé, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations and Chairman of the Special Committee	8
Movement of Non-Aligned Countries	H.E. Mr. Soeharto, President of the Republic of Indonesia and Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, delivered by H.E. Mr. Nugroho Wisnumurti, Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations	9
Organization of the Islamic Conference	H.E. Mr. Hikmet Çetin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey and Chairman of the Twentieth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, delivered by H.E. Mr. Tahsin Burcuoğlu, Deputy Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations	10
League of Arab States	H.E. Mr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel Meguid, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, delivered by H.E. Mr. Mahmoud Aboul-Nasr, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations	11
Group of Arab States	H.E. Mr. Hassan Ali Hussain Al-Ni'mah, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations and Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of December	12
International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine	Ms. Colleen F. McGuire, Esq., of the National Lawyers Guild (United States), representing the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine	12

READEX
FICHE

Page

III. Messages received on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

A. Messages from heads of State or Government

Afghanistan	H.E. Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani, Chairman of the Leadership Council and President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan	14
Albania	H.E. Mr. Aleksander Meksi, Prime Minister of Albania	15
Bahrain	His Majesty Sheikh Isa Bin Sulman Al Khalifa, Emir of the State of Bahrain	15
Bangladesh	H.E. Mrs. Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh	16
Burkina Faso	H.E. Mr. Blaise Campaoré, President, Head of State and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Burkina Faso	16
Cambodia	H.E. Mr. Norodom Sihanouk, Head of State and President of the Supreme National Council of Cambodia	17
China	H.E. Mr. Li Peng, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China	17
Cuba	H.E. Mr. Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Council of State and Government of the Republic of Cuba	17
Cyprus	H.E. Mr. George Vassiliou, President of the Republic of Cyprus	18
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	H.E. Mr. Kim Il Sung, President of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	18
Egypt	H.E. Mr. Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt	18
Guinea	H.E. General Lansana Conte, President of the Republic of Guinea	19
India	H.E. Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, Prime Minister of India	19
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	H.E. Mr. Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran	20
Jordan	His Majesty King Hussein Bin Talal of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan	20
Lao People's Democratic Republic	H.E. Mr. Khamtay Siphandone, Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic	22
Malaysia	H.E. Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia	22
Maldives	H.E. Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Republic of Maldives	23
Malta	H.E. Dr. Edward Fenech Adami, Prime Minister of Malta	23
Pakistan	H.E. Mr. Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan	24
Qatar	His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar	24
Russian Federation	H.E. Mr. Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation	25
Saudi Arabia	The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud, King of Saudi Arabia	25

		Page
Senegal	H.E. Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of the Republic of Senegal	26
Spain	H.E. Mr. Felipe Gonzalez, Prime Minister of Spain	27
Sri Lanka	H.E. Mr. Ranasinghe Premadasa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka	27
Suriname	H.E. Mr. Runaldo R. Venetiaan, President of the Republic of Suriname	27
Thailand	H.E. Mr. Chuan Leekpai, Prime Minister of Thailand	28
Tunisia	H.E. Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia	28
Turkey	H.E. Mr. Süleyman Demirel, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey	29
Uganda	H.E. Mr. Yoweri K. Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda	29
United Arab Emirates	His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates	30
Viet Nam	H.E. Mr. Vo Van Kiet, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam	31
Yemen	H.E. Ali Abdellah Saleh, President of the Presidential Council of Yemen	31

B. Messages from Ministers for Foreign Affairs

Ecuador	H.E. Mr. Diego Paredes, Minister for Foreign Affairs	32
Greece	H.E. Mr. Michael G. Papaconstantinou, Minister for Foreign Affairs	33
Hungary	H.E. Mr. Géza Jeszenszky, Minister for Foreign Affairs	33
Japan	H.E. Mr. Michio Watanabe, Minister for Foreign Affairs	33
Lebanon	H.E. Mr. Fares Bouez, Minister for Foreign Affairs	34
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	H.E. Mr. Omar Mustafa al-Muntasir, Secretary of the General People's Committee of the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation	35
Mauritania	H.E. Mohamed Abdersahmane Ould Moine, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation	35
Oman	H.E. Mr. Yousef Bin Al-Alawi Bin Abdullah, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs	36
Panama	H.E. Mr. Julio E. Linares, Minister for Foreign Affairs	36
Philippines	H.E. Mr. Roberto R. Romulo, Secretary of Foreign Affairs	37
Republic of Korea	H.E. Mr. Lee Sang-Ock, Minister of Foreign Affairs	37
Republic of Namibia	H.E. Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Minister of Foreign Affairs	38
Syrian Arab Republic	H.E. Mr. Farouk Al-Sharaa, Minister for Foreign Affairs	38
Trinidad and Tobago	H.E. Mr. Ralph Maraj, Minister of Foreign Affairs	39
Ukraine	H.E. Mr. Anatoliy M. Zlenko, Minister for Foreign Affairs	39

Page

C. **Messages from intergovernmental organizations with observer status at the United Nations**

Organization of the Islamic Conference — H.E. Dr. Hamid Algabid, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference 40

D. **Messages from national liberation movements**

Pan Africanist Congress of Azania — Dr. S.E.M. Pheko, Chief Representative to the United Nations 41

E. **Messages from United Nations specialized agencies**

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization — Mr. Federico Mayor, Director-General 41

F. **Messages from non-governmental organizations**

Africa Alliance of Young Men's Christian Association 42

Central Latinoamericana de Trabajadores 42

Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding 42

European Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine 42

General Union of Palestinian Women 43

Indo-Arab Islamic Youth Association 44

International Progress Organization 44

Liaison Committee of Development NGOs to the European Communities 45

Muslim World League 45

Soviet Anti-Zionist Committee 46

Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail 47

Union of Palestinian American Women 48

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom 48

IV. **Closing Statements**

H.E. Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People 49

Mr. Farouk Kaddoumi, Head of the Political Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization 49

I. COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

On 30 November 1992, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed at United Nations Headquarters, New York, and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna, as well as in several other cities, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B of 2 December 1977.

All States Members of the United Nations, specialized agencies and observers were invited to attend the solemn meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

At that meeting, statements were made by H.E. Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee; H.E. Mr. Stoyan Ganev (Bulgaria), President of the General Assembly; the Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali; and the President of the Security Council for the month of November, H.E. Mr. André Erdös (Hungary). The Observer of Palestine, Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, read out a message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Also, H.E. Mr. Stanley Kalpagé (Sri Lanka), made a statement as Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

In addition, the representative of Indonesia, H.E. Mr. Nugroho Wisnumurti, read out a message from President Soeharto, in his capacity as Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. A further message was delivered by H.E. Mr. Tahsin Burcuoglu, Deputy Permanent Representative of Turkey, on behalf of H.E. Mr. Hikmet Çetin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey and Chairman of the Twentieth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers. The observer for the League of Arab States, Mr. Mahmoud Aboul-Nasr, read out a message from its Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel Meguid. Further statements were made by H.E. Mr. Hassan Ali Hussain Al-Ni'Mah (Qatar), speaking as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of December 1992 and Ms. Colleen F. McGuire, representative of the International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ICCP).

Concluding statements were made by the Chairman of the Committee and Mr. Farouk Kaddoumi, head of the Political Department of the PLO.

Messages to commemorate the occasion were received from 22 heads of States, 12 heads of Government, 15 Foreign Ministers, as well as the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Still further messages were received from 13 non-governmental organizations active on the question of Palestine.

In further commemoration of the International Day, the Committee arranged the screening of a series of films during the week beginning 30 November in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium.

At the request of the Committee, in still further commemoration of the International Day, the office of the Permanent Observer for Palestine to the United Nations presented an exhibit in cooperation with the Committee, which was displayed in the Public Lobby at United Nations Headquarters from 30 November to 4 December 1992.

At the United Nations Office in Geneva, a solemn meeting was held on 30 November 1992. The meeting was chaired by the Director-General of the Geneva Office, who read out the statement made by the Secretary-General in New York and also that of the Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Gambari (Nigeria) spoke on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The Permanent Observer of Palestine at Geneva, Mr. Ramlawi, also delivered a statement. Further statements were made by representatives of the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of African Unity and ICCP. Representatives of the Arab and African Groups also spoke. Messages were received from the President of the Russian Federation, the Emir of the State of Bahrain, the Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, and the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Other related activities included the screening of UNRWA films and a United Nations exhibit on the question of Palestine. A further exhibit was organized by the United Nations Arab Book Club.

At the United Nations Office in Vienna, a solemn meeting was held on 30 November 1992. The meeting was chaired by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, who delivered the statement made by the Secretary-General in New York. The Permanent Representative of Indonesia at Vienna spoke on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Other speakers included: the Foreign Minister of Austria, H.E. Mr. A. Mock; the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Mr. I. Turkmen; and the Permanent Observer of Palestine at Vienna, Mr. F. Aweidah, who delivered the message of Chairman Yasser Arafat. Further statements were made by Ms. Charlotte M. Teuber, representative of ICCP, and H.E. Mr. Shigui Chen, Permanent Representative of China, who delivered a message from the Prime Minister of that country. The Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates also addressed the meeting. Some 87 representatives from Member States attended the event. The programme included the screening of video tapes dealing with the cultural and traditional life of the Palestinian family and an exhibition of Palestinian artifacts. In the course of the day, a Palestinian folk music group played in the rotunda.

II. TEXTS OF STATEMENTS MADE AND MESSAGES DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, 1992

Statement by H.E. Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

[Original: French]

Today the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People is holding a solemn meeting to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 32/40 B, of 2 December 1977.

It is my pleasure and honour to welcome H.E. Mr. Stoyan Ganev, President of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, H.E. Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. André Erdös, President of the Security Council, H.E. Mr. Stanley Kalpagé, Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, and H.E. Mr. Farouk Kaddoumi, Head of the Political Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization, representative of Palestine. I should also like to welcome representatives of Member States, intergovernmental organizations and liberation movements, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations, members of the press and all those who have accepted the Committee's invitation to participate in this solemn meeting.

I now invite everyone here to rise and observe a minute of silence in memory of all those who have given their lives for the cause of the Palestinian people.

I should like now to make a statement on behalf of the Committee.

Today we are commemorating the forty-fifth anniversary of the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 181 (II), which partitioned historic Palestine and called for the creation of two independent States, one Arab and one Jewish, joined in economic union, and for a special international regime for Jerusalem.

That resolution, which embodied the General Assembly's recognition of the existence and rights of two peoples in Palestine, provides the foundation for the creation of the State of Israel and for the rightful claim of the Palestinian people to the establishment of its own State alongside Israel. The fact that, after so many years and the shedding of so much blood in this conflict, the Palestinian State has not yet come into being does not negate the wisdom and practicality of that resolution. It demonstrates, rather, the lack of political will and far-sightedness of those concerned, and the continuing hold of an ideology of recourse to military power rather than negotiations to resolve political conflicts.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has traditionally held this annual commemoration to remind the international community of its unfulfilled promise to the Palestinian people and to appeal to it to renew its pledge to bring about this objective. The world of today is a vastly different one from that of 45 years ago, or even of a few years ago. There is an increasing consensus in the international community that conflicts should be resolved through political means in accordance with international law and the principles of humanitarian law, as well as an increasing willingness and ability to take joint measures to enforce its decisions. On this occasion, we need to reaffirm the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with respect to the question of Palestine until the question can be resolved in all its aspects in accordance with those principles.

Our commemoration today also provides a forum for reflection on the opportunities as well as dangers inherent in the current peace process and the lack so far of substantive results more than a year after it began. It is clear that the parties concerned, and indeed the international community as a whole, must intensify their efforts to break through the impasse and advance towards a just settlement in accordance with United Nations resolutions. Only such a settlement can in fact meet the needs and aspirations of all the peoples of the region and bring about a lasting peace. It is also necessary to reaffirm the urgent need for measures to defuse the continuing tension and violence in the region, which are exacerbated by the dynamic of occupation and repression.

Our Committee stresses once again that the restoration of respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Palestinians living in the occupied territory, and for the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, is a fundamental obligation of the occupying Power on which the international community must continue to insist. Measures in this regard would also contribute to creating a climate more conducive to peace. The confiscation of land and the building of settlements; the use of firearms to deal with demonstrators and the selective killings of Palestinian militants; the curfews and restrictions on freedom of movement and association; the continued detention of thousands of persons and their ill-treatment and even torture; the use of deportations and collective punishment; the separation of

of thousands of persons and their ill-treatment and even torture; the use of deportations and collective punishment; the separation of thousands of families; the continued imposition of unjust military orders; and the fetters imposed on the economic development of the occupied territory must cease if a meaningful peace process is to move forward.

In numerous resolutions, the United Nations and in particular the Security Council, have expressed the consensus of the international community with regard to the legal obligations of Israel, the occupying Power, under the Fourth Geneva Convention and have called for the implementation of its provisions. The continued disregard of the occupying Power for these decisions undermines the authority and credibility of these legal standards and those charged with enforcing them. The Committee firmly believes that it is the right of the international community to take action in order to ensure respect for the Convention and to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people living under occupation, regardless of whether or not there are peace negotiations under way.

There are many obvious measures that the occupying Power can take immediately in order to demonstrate its good will and readiness for peace, and without jeopardizing its security, and we call once again on the Government of Israel to act immediately to end the repression, restore respect for human rights, roll back the occupation, and take concrete measures to improve the living conditions of the Palestinians.

For its part, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People will continue to do its utmost in accordance with its mandate to contribute to the attainment of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement based on respect for the norms of international law, the United Nations Charter and relevant United Nations resolutions, as well as to promote international action in support of the rights and needs of the Palestinian people.

As we commemorate today the anniversary of the historic decision partitioning Palestine, let us recommit ourselves to its implementation and to solidarity with the Palestinian people until its historic and just objective — sovereignty and freedom in its own land — is finally achieved.

H.E. Mr. Stoyan Ganev, President of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly

May I first of all express to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People my appreciation for having been invited to take part in this important observance.

Recognizing the need to strengthen and consolidate international support for the Palestinian people, the General Assembly by its resolution 32/40 B requested the annual observance of 29 November, the anniversary of the adoption of resolution 181 (II), which partitioned Palestine, as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. In commemorating this occasion, therefore, the international community is renewing its pledge to the Palestinian people that its just demands and aspirations will continue to have the firm support of the international community.

The question of Palestine has been a major concern of the United Nations practically since its establishment and remains the longest-lasting unresolved conflict on our agenda, posing a constant threat to peace and security in the region and draining its resources. The Organization bears a historical responsibility towards ensuring the just settlement of this question, based on full restoration of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, in accordance with the principles of the Charter and United Nations resolutions.

The far-reaching changes in the international arena and in the Middle East region itself in the past few years have brought this objective closer than ever before. It is now increasingly recognized by all concerned that the United Nations has an essential and constructive contribution to make, both in terms of facilitating the peace process and any arrangements resulting from it and in terms of providing the needed assistance for development.

The General Assembly has welcomed the convening of the Peace Conference on the Middle East, sponsored by the United States of America and the former Soviet Union, for the achievement of a comprehensive peace based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The fact that an invitation was recently extended to the United Nations to attend, as a full extraregional participant, the meetings of three working groups on regional issues is also to be welcomed. The ongoing peace process constitutes a significant step towards the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region. It is to be hoped that the spirit of good will and mutual respect that has characterized the bilateral and multilateral meetings thus far will continue in the future and that the talks will soon lead to positive and concrete results. We understand that such a complex, difficult and long-lasting conflict will take time to resolve. However, the dangers inherent in a continuing stalemate and in the accumulation of frustrated hopes and needs clearly impose on all concerned the need to intensify their efforts to advance towards a just settlement.

Pending such a settlement, however, I should like to remind this Committee that numerous resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council have called for the restoration of respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Palestinians living in the occupied territory, including Jerusalem, in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Measures in this regard not only are required under various international instruments to which Israel is a party, but would also contribute to creating a climate more conducive to peace. We hope the Government of Israel will re-examine its policies and practices towards the Palestinians living under occupation, which have resulted in an increasingly intolerable situation, and will take the necessary measures to bring an end to the suffering and hardships the Palestinian people have endured for more than 25 years.

Before concluding, I should like to congratulate the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and its Chairman, H.E. Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé of Senegal, for their continuing efforts to promote a peaceful solution of the Palestine question in accordance with international principles and United Nations resolutions. The observance of this Day will certainly inspire hope in the minds and hearts of the Palestinians and convey to them once again that the United Nations remains committed to their just cause the realization of their inalienable rights. I take this opportunity to extend to you, Mr. Chairman, and the Committee my best wishes for success in your important endeavour.

H.E. Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General

I am honoured to participate, for the first time since taking office as Secretary-Gen ral, in this important observance held under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People symbolizes the continuing responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine and its commitment to the promotion of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. I attach the greatest importance to the achievement of peace in the region and will do my utmost in this regard.

It is widely agreed that three elements are basic to the desired settlement: first, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Arab territories occupied since June 1967; secondly, acknowledgement of and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all States in the region, including Israel, and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries; and thirdly, a satisfactory solution of the Palestinian problem based on the recognition of the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination. In this connection, the question of Jerusalem remains of primary importance.

The continuing escalation of violence in the Middle East and the resulting loss of life by innocent civilians is of deep concern. The prolongation of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which has caused so much suffering to the peoples of the region and has held back their economic development, is in no one's interest.

I welcome the peace initiative launched at the Madrid Peace Conference a year ago. I am following with great attention current efforts to achieve, in the words of the letter of invitation to the Conference, "a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement through direct negotiations on two tracks, between Israel and the Arab States, and between Israel and the Palestinians". This process has the support of the parties concerned and has as its framework Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). These negotiations prove that dialogue is possible.

The United Nations is ready to assist the participants in achieving and building a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region. I am, therefore, pleased to accept the invitation extended to the United Nations to attend, as a full extra-regional participant, the multilateral negotiations of the Middle East peace talks. Last week, I designated Ambassador Chinmaya Gharekhan of India as my Special Representative. Ambassador Gharekhan will coordinate the United Nations role in the Working Groups on Arms Control and Regional Security, on Water, Environment, Economic and Regional Development, and on Refugees.

It is hoped that the current peace process will result in agreements that will satisfy the needs and aspirations of all the parties concerned, and allow the Palestinian people to realize its inalienable rights. This unprecedented and historic opportunity should not be missed. The situation calls for a spirit of compromise and mutual building of confidence toward the achievement of the common objective of true peace in the Middle East.

[Original: French] Ever since December 1987, tension has been constant. Hundreds of people have been killed, houses have been destroyed, and Palestinians have been forced to leave the towns and villages where they had lived for generations.

Consequently, it is of the greatest importance that we ensure implementation of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention to all the territories that have been occupied since June 1967. The international community has time and time again declared that the Geneva Convention was applicable to occupied territories. Time and again it has called on Israel to respect its obligations as the occupying Power. The principal Contracting Parties to the Convention have the duty to ensure that the provisions of the Convention are fully respected in the occupied territories. The credibility of the convention is at stake, as is that of international law.

Declarations of intention and resolutions, when they are never actually put into effect, do not serve peace. They only heighten resentment and fuel criticism of international action in the service of the loftiest ideals. The very things we stand for are in jeopardy.

In resolution 681 (1990), the Security Council of the United Nations gave the Secretary-General a mandate. Long committed as I have been to peace action in that part of the world, I am determined to do my utmost to put each of its terms into effect.

[Original: Arabic] In conclusion, I should like to extend my thanks to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. I wish to state that I shall work in support of this Committee. Let me reiterate that a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East can be achieved only if the Palestinian people is able to exercise its right to self-determination.

H.E. Mr. André Erdos, President of the Security Council for the month of November 1992

Allow me first of all to give my heartiest thanks to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for having invited me, as President of the Security Council, to participate in this special meeting marking the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

It is for me both a pleasure and a privilege to join in this important annual event, which expresses solidarity with the Palestinian people and the enduring commitment of the international community to the achievement of a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East question. We remain ever mindful that efforts to reach this goal represent not only the recognition of the legitimate right of the Palestinian people, but also the possibility of bringing stability to a particularly troubled region of the world, thereby fostering international peace and security.

As is well known, the Security Council has been closely associated with the persistent efforts to forge an equitable solution to the Middle East situation. It has been called upon many times to direct its urgent attention to the crises engendered by the conflict and its consequences. The members of the Security Council reaffirm the need for scrupulous observance of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which is fully applicable to all the occupied territories. In so doing, the Council has always been aware of the magnitude of the Palestinian problem, and it remains seized of many aspects of the situation in the Middle East, including the question of the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. For its part, therefore, the Security Council will continue to devote attention to the problem with a view to seeking a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for the peoples of the region as a whole.

As President of the Council, I followed with keen interest, as I am sure all members of the Council did, the developments of the past year in the bilateral and multilateral peace talks arising from the Madrid Peace Conference convened on 30 October 1991.

The process in place represents a new beginning, a new opportunity to establish a mechanism capable of building a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. It is particularly gratifying that the parties involved support efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement through direct negotiations based on United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

This promising process — memorable for the fact that for the first time all parties to the conflict, including the representatives of the Palestinian people, took an active part in the process — gives reason to hope that the peace talks will continue to tackle the important substantive issues that lie ahead on the road to peace. The members of the Security Council call on all the parties involved in the peace process launched at Madrid to cooperate in efforts to reach a comprehensive settlement and, in particular, a solution to the Palestinian problem in all its aspects.

As President of the Council — and I am sure this is true of all members of the Council — I am also particularly gratified that the United Nations was recently invited to participate as a full extra-regional participant in the multilateral talks. Thus United Nations representatives have participated in recent multilateral meetings on the environment, economic development, and refugees.

Guided by the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter, the Security Council will continue its efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East for the benefit of all parties concerned, including the Palestinian people.

Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, delivered by Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer for Palestine

[Original: Arabic]

I have the honour to convey to you, Mr. Chairman, the message of President Yasser Arafat, President of the State of Palestine and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, on the occasion of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People:

"In the name of our Palestinian people, my brother members of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and in my own name, I would like to express to you my highest appreciation and deepest thanks for inviting me to attend your august meeting and for your lofty work and the efforts you are making in support of our people's struggle to regain and exercise its inalienable rights. I would like also to express my deepest thanks and gratitude to all friends at the United Nations for the efforts they are exerting in explaining to the public and furthering the just cause of Palestine and the just cause of the Palestinian people.

"I seize this opportunity also to express to H.E. Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations, our deepest thanks and appreciation for his persistent efforts towards implementing the resolutions of the United Nations and its Charter on all levels, in all fields and in all areas, including the Middle East, due to the great influence of the Middle East issue and its central cause, the question of Palestine, on international security and stability.

"The observance by the international community of this day of solidarity with the just struggle of the Palestinian people to regain its inalienable national rights is an express of the international community's desire to find a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and to enable our people to regain and exercise these inalienable national rights, including the right to return, to self-determination and to establish its independent State, with Holy Jerusalem as its capital. It is also an occupation that embodies the meaning of international solidarity with our people, who have suffered greatly ever since the start of its tragedy over four decades ago.

"More than a year has passed since the start of the process of negotiations which began in Madrid at the end of October of last year. As you know, we in the PLO were among those who exerted the most efforts to facilitate and ensure the start of this process and make it a tangible reality, when we accepted participating in it despite its unjust conditions. Our participation in this process, however, was made in accordance with the resolutions adopted by the constitutional institutions of the PLO, especially those of the Palestine National Council and the Palestinian Central Council, and in accordance, also, with the initiative of President Bush, which is based on the principles of land for peace, implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and realization of the political rights of the Palestinian people and security for all States in the region. Until now, seven rounds in the bilateral talks and many more rounds of meetings in the multilateral talks have taken place.

"Yet, despite a year of persistent efforts we have made with all those who are faithful to the peace process and with the co-sponsors, we find that this year has passed without the achievement of any tangible progress on the road leading to peace, especially on the Palestinian track where, according to the letter of invitation, it was supposed that the first stage of negotiations would end, and the interim period would start and would be the transition that would lead to a permanent solution, which would include total Israeli withdrawal from our occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and the onset of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, to be enjoyed by our whole area and our peoples, and which would reflect positively on the issues of international security, stability, and peace as a whole.

"Regretfully, however, one principal factor has blocked progress on the Palestinian track — that is, that the Israeli side joined these negotiations with the aim of gaining time. This was openly declared by Mr. Yitzhak Shamir, former Prime Minister of Israel, immediately following the Israeli elections last June when he declared that his aim in joining the process was solely to gain time in order to enable Israel to confiscate and swallow up more Palestinian land under occupation and to build more Jewish settlements. Unfortunately, however, we find that the Government of Mr. Rabin pursues the same course as that of the Government of Shamir, especially with regard to the Palestinian track. This is the reason behind the gradual withering away of the optimism found in certain circles after Mr. Rabin's success in the recent elections. Sheer facts prove also that the Government of Israel, by its procrastination and time-wasting on the Palestinian track, aims at consecrating an Israeli demographic and colonial fait accompli on the Palestinian occupied territories. Mr. Rabin was encouraged to continue on this course by the policies of the current United States Administration, which has provided Israel with $10 billion in loan guarantees and has assured Israel of maintaining its military edge in the region. Rabin returned from his visit to the United States to declare the building of 11,000 settlement units in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and 14,000 settlement units in Holy Jerusalem.

"In parallel with the situation in these negotiations, the situation in the occupied territories is also rapidly deteriorating. The Israeli occupation authorities are continuing to exercise the policy of the iron fist in a brutal manner, carrying out arbitrary practices, beatings, detentions and killings, practising oppression, imposing siege and starvation on our Palestinian people, perpetrating various crimes in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and violating our people's basic human rights in all their aspects. In addition to all this, they are continuing deliberately to violate and desecrate Islamic and Christian holy places. Furthermore, the continual Israeli acts of aggression against south Lebanon and the Palestinian refugee camps there are increasing tension and creating an atmosphere that is not conducive to the march of peace, but rather are further complicating it.

"The whole world — and particularly the United Nations — knows that the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict lies in the Palestinian cause, and that progress on any other front in the absence of progress on the Palestinian front will not lead to a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. As I said in my speech before the General Assembly of the United Nations in November 1973, 'War flares up in Palestine, and yet it is in Palestine that peace will be born'.

"The Palestinian cause is at the core of peace, security and stability not only in Palestine but also in the world at large. This, however, does not mean that no progress should be made on any of the other fronts: on the contrary, it should be. That is why we have taken the initiative to set up coordination between all the Arab delegations in order to facilitate the peace process. Yet we should all be keen to make tangible progress on the Palestinian front, particularly because the attempts of Israel to ignore international legitimacy as a basis for this political settlement make it impossible to achieve tangible results in the peace process.

"A comprehensive solution requires, firstly, an Israeli commitment to international legitimacy. It also requires the sponsors of the conference and the international community — and especially the European Economic Community, China, Japan and the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement — to exert their best efforts to make Israeli commit itself to respecting international legitimacy and carrying out United Nations resolutions, for international legitimacy is an indivisible whole.

"We in the PLO have contributed a sufficient degree of flexibility and provided the necessary facilities in the service of peace in the Middle East. Does the Israeli side have the desire to make a similar contribution to the march of peace, in respect of the Palestinians in particular?

"Further, since the legal terms of reference of this peace process are international ones, we believe it is high time that the United Nations, alongside the sponsors of the peace process, played an effective role in solving the Arab-Israeli conflict, in accordance with its many resolutions calling for an international peace conference to be convened under its auspices, with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and the parties directly concerned with peace in the Middle East, including the PLO on an equal footing with the other parties, especially since the year designed for the negotiations has passed without any progress on the Palestinian track.

"In order for the United Nations to start making its required contribution, it must assume, forthwith, the responsibility for protecting our Palestinian people under occupation in accordance with its many relevant resolutions, in particular, Security Council resolutions 681 (1990) and 726 (1992). The Secretary-General of the United Nations must undoubtedly play a role of outstanding importance in ensuring that all the organs of the United Nations themselves play a more active role in this, particularly the Security Council, which is able to adopt binding resolutions as it is the principal organ concerned with the maintenance of peace and security world wide.

"Despite the fact that the process of negotiations has reached a deadlock, I should like to assure you that our Palestinian people are more than ever before determined to continue seeking to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the area. For us, achieving this peace is not only a position or a policy which changes under changing conditions; it is a question of principle and an act of faith.

"Yet this just and comprehensive peace cannot be achieved by continuing the Israeli occupation of our land and of the Islamic and Christian holy places. That is why our people's struggle will continue, as will its blessed intifadah, wave after wave, under the leadership of the PLO, its sole legitimate representative, until our Palestinian people are able to regain and exercise its inalienable national rights, including its right to return, to self-determination and to establish its independent State with Holy Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with international legitimacy.

"On this day when the world expresses its solidarity with our Palestinian people, I should like to reiterate the solidarity of our Palestinian people and of the PLO with all peoples struggling to achieve their freedom, independence and sovereignty. I should also like to affirm that we are for a world dominated by peace, security and tranquillity and free of regional conflicts; such conflicts, should they arise, should be solved through dialogue and understanding on the basis of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and equal opportunities for all.

"I should like to assure you that we stand alongside the fraternal people of Somalia in overcoming its plight. We support enabling the United Nations and its agencies to carry out their roles in alleviating this plight and providing help to the fraternal people of Somalia.

"We stand behind the fraternal people of Iraq and favour maintaining its country's territorial integrity. We support lifting the embargo imposed on them and on their children and providing them with the necessary foodstuffs and medical and other supplies.

"We also stand with the fraternal people of Libya and call for lifting the embargo imposed on them, and for solving the problem with fraternal Libya through dialogue and understanding.

"We affirm here, also, our support for the struggle of the peoples of South Africa to regain their freedom and sovereignty, and to achieve justice and equality in their country. We do indeed appreciate the leading role of brother Nelson Mandela and his blessed efforts in working for the realization of national and human rights for the people of South Africa. We also appreciate the major militant efforts of the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, and of all the democratic forces in South Africa.

"I have always called for solving the existing conflicts between the republics of former Yugoslavia in a spirt of dialogue and understanding concomitant with the historical relations of cooperation which existed during their recent history. The destruction, killings, deportations and the violations of the rights of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina must be deplored and condemned. The policy of 'ethnic cleansing' in particular cannot be tolerated in an age which calls for harmony, cooperation and coexistence between peoples. The United Nations has important responsibilities and a great role to play in the maintenance of peace, and not only in terms of maintaining peace in the area but also in terms of safeguarding those human lives that are now being lost with every passing day.

"Finally, I should like to reiterate my deepest thanks and highest appreciation for the support and solidarity which all members display on the side of the just struggle of our people. I wish members all success in carrying out the noble duties assigned to the Committee so that it can contribute to achieving a just and lasting peace in our area through restoring our people's inalienable national rights and enabling our people to exercise them."

SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

H.E. Mr. Stanley Kalpagé, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations and Chairman of the Special Committee

First, Mr. Chairman, I wish to express my thanks to you and to the other members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for inviting me to take part in this solemn observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

On behalf of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, and on my own behalf, I have the honour to convey this message on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

Since the establishment by the General Assembly in 1968, the Special Committee has always endeavoured to provide in its reports a faithful and accurate picture of the situation of human rights in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967. This year, as in the past, the Special Committee was precluded from visiting the occupied territories to examine the situation in situ and to hear the position of the Israeli authorities directly responsible for the issues dealt with in the Special Committee's reports. The Special Committee has nevertheless tried to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it in the best possible way by reflecting in its report relevant information concerning the human rights situation in the occupied territories, received from a wide range of sources both orally and in writing. The Special Committee has taken particular care to rely on information that has not been contradicted by the Government of Israel, including reports appearing in the Israeli press and other news media published in the occupied territories.

Having examined and analysed the information and evidence placed before it, the Special Committee has reached the conclusion, as reflected in its twenty-fourth report to the General Assembly, submitted at the current session, that the situation of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms in the occupied territories has continued to be extremely serious and remains a threat to international peace and security.

The peace process that began with the Madrid Conference does not seem to have yet had a significant effect on the overall enjoyment of human rights by the population of the occupied territories. The hardships faced by the population in the occupied territories derive from the fact that occupation itself constitutes a violation of human rights and engenders a situation where human rights violations will occur.

The Special Committee hopes that the ongoing peace negotiations will bring about a climate of confidence and mutual trust that will be conducive to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict. We trust that such a settlement will take into account the rights of all peoples in the area, including the rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories.

Let me take this opportunity, Mr. Chairman, to extend to you and to the other members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People the best wishes of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories for the success of your commendable endeavours in the cause of peace in the Middle East.

MOVEMENT OF NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES

H.E. Mr. Soeharto, President of the Republic of Indonesia and Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, delivered by H.E. Mr. Nugroho Wisnumurti, Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations

It is a distinct privilege for me to read out a message from H.E. Mr. Soeharto, President of the Republic of Indonesia, in his capacity as Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, on the occasion of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The message reads as follows:

"On the solemn occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I would like, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, to reaffirm unflinching support for the struggle of the Palestinian people in attaining its cherished objectives of peace, freedom and justice. This year's observance coincides with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the occupation by Israel of Palestinian and other Arab territories. Yet a quarter-century of occupation and oppression has not weakened their determination to attain their cherished objectives. Rather, they have strengthened the resolve of the valiant Palestinians to resist occupation and to regain and exercise their inalienable rights to self-determination and statehood.

"The initiation of the Middle East peace process has therefore raised our hopes for a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, with the Palestinian question at the core. The Movement was particularly gratified that Palestinian representatives are participating in the ongoing negotiations with other concerned States, which is a belated recognition of their political and national identity, thus achieving yet another historic stride towards the materialization of the already proclaimed Palestinian State. But since its inaugural meeting in Madrid during October 1991, these talks have failed to show any tangible results. While the representatives of Palestine and of Arab States participating in this endeavour have adopted a rational and balanced approach, Israel's seeming flexibility has masked its rigid position of refusing to negotiate even the possibility of withdrawing from the illegally occupied West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip. Thus, Israel's unilateral interpretation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967), which upholds the principle of land for peace, and its consequent refusal to withdraw from occupied territories, have injected a new and more disturbing element that threatens to undermine the peace process. Israel should therefore be called upon to contribute to the ongoing search for peace by according the right to self-determination to the Palestinian people, observing international treaties and conventions and implementing United Nations resolutions and decisions.

"The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries supports the call given by the Palestine National Council (PNC) for the universal recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Furthermore, we endorse the basic positions taken by the PNC for a freeze on settlements, the disengagement of Israel from occupied territories, the modalities for elections, an interim administration to assume control over all aspects of life in the occupied territories and for the transition period to lead to the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian State.

"We are deeply concerned over Israel's persistence in its policies of settlements and expansion through demographic, cultural and social changes and the continuing denial of the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, including the increasing imposition of harsh collective punishment and other repressive measures. What is therefore urgently required is the implementation of Security Council resolution 681 (1991) to ensure the safety and protection of Palestinians under occupation through the establishment of a properly mandated United Nations presence.

"For the members of the Non-Aligned Movement, the achievement of a lasting solution to the question of Palestine remains a priority objective. They also remain steadfast in their commitment to a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict based on the unconditional withdrawal of Israel from occupied territories.

"The Declaration issued by the Movement's Committee on Palestine during the Tenth Summit Meeting of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Jakarta last September, calls for the continuing responsibility of the United Nations on the question of Palestine. It also reaffirms the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions, particularly the resolutions of the Security Council, as providing a viable basis for the achievement of a comprehensive, just and durable peace in the region.

"Finally, the non-aligned countries fully support the activities of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and will continue to extend their cooperation in achieving our common goal."

ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE

H.E. Mr. Hikmet Çetin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey and Chairman of the Twentieth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, delivered by H.E. Mr. Tahsin Burcuoğlu, Deputy Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations

I have the honour to read the message of H.E. Mr. Hikmet Çetin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, in his capacity as Chairman of the Twentieth Islamic Conference of Foreign Minister.

"On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, it is a pleasure for me, as Chairman of the Twentieth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, to reaffirm our constant support for the Palestinian people in its continuing struggle to attain its legitimate rights, including that of self-determination and that of establishing an independent State of its own.

"As is well known, since its inception, the Palestinian people have remained at the centre of the concerns of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). The noble struggle of the Palestinian people for its inalienable rights has always enjoyed the support of the totality of the membership of OIC. This support has been forthcoming because the Palestinian struggle has been a just struggle for principles that are embodied in the Charter of the United Nations. The wide support for Palestinian rights has also been based on the firm belief that peace and security in the Middle East are dependent on justice being done to the Palestinian people.

"We in OIC reaffirm that peace will not prevail in the Middle East unless and until Israel withdraws from all occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, and unless the Palestinian cause, considered to the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is solved in the context of an overall and just settlement in the region.

"Furthermore, we consider that settlements established by Israel are illegal and that it is necessary to provide international guarantees for their removal in accordance with the resolutions of international legality, including Security Council resolution 465 (1980).

"It is in this context that we evaluate the Middle East Peace conference as a historic opportunity for reaching a just and comprehensive settlement of the Palestine question and the Arab-Israeli conflict, based on the resolutions of international legality, including resolutions 242 (1967), 325 (1973) and 338 (1973).

"We, in OIC, are closely following the developments taking place in the Middle East Peace Conference. We have both expressed support for the ongoing Middle East Peace Conference and called upon the co-sponsors of the Conference to use their influence with Israel to persuade it to refrain from hindering the peace process and put an end to its aggressions and its repressive practices against the Palestinians, so as to ensure the continuation of the peace process and make substantial progress in the peace talks.

"On this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, as the Chairman of the Twentieth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, I am also pleased to commend the persistent efforts made by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to promote a wider awareness of the question of Palestine and thus contribute to fostering stronger sympathy and support in the international community for the legitimate cause of the Palestinian people.

"On behalf of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, on this occasion, I want to recall the unwavering support and complete solidarity of OIC with the Palestinian people.

"It is our most sincere wish to see this gifted people, the Palestinians, enjoying the blessings of peace, freedom, security and self-determination. We salute their struggle and reiterate our full support."

LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

H.E. Mr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel Meguid, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, delivered by H.E. Mr. Mahmoud Aboul-Nasr, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations

[Original: Arabic]

It is my privilege to convey to you the following message of Dr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel Meguid, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People:

"It is a pleasure for me to communicate with you as we commemorate, together with many of the world's peoples and Governments, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, reaffirming our faith in the justice of its cause and its constant struggle to obtain its inalienable rights, the foremost of which is the right to self-determination.

"When in 1947 the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II) — known as the 'partition resolution' — the States that supported it did not question the right of the Palestinian people to establish its own independent State on its national soil. Since the outbreak of the struggle for hegemony over the territory of Palestine, the Palestinian people have made many sacrifices in defence of its right to independence and successfully resisted all the pressure aimed at expelling it from its homes.

"After the 1948 disaster, the overwhelming majority of the Palestinian people experienced much bitterness and frustration. When Israel occupied territory far in excess of that allotted to it under the partition resolution, the Palestinian people found that the United Nations response was to grant membership to Israel and at the same time to transform its cause into a mere question of refugees. Moreover, despite the approval by the representative of the Israeli Government of the 1949 Lausanne protocols, which deals with respect for the boundaries established by the partition resolution and adherence to the principle of return of the Palestinian refugees to their homes, Israel went back on its word and ignored its commitments. The United Nations mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte, could not but describe that development as an affront to the principles of justice, for it embodies the judgement of perpetual banishment of the Arabs who had been firmly rooted in that territory for centuries.

"The sufferings, both past and present, of the Palestinian people have neither impaired its confidence in itself and the justice of its cause nor made it lose hope for a better future; on the contrary, it had continued its struggle and endowed its revolution with all its material and human potential, with a view to obtaining its legitimate rights.

"The Palestinian revolution has met with every type of repression and inhuman practice condemned by the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. Successive attempts to crush it have failed. At every stage of its development, it has to strive tirelessly to re-energize the Palestinians in order to enable them to face the various challenges. The Palestinian revolution has succeeded in creating many productive, scientific and educational establishments and broadened its efforts to include the fields of social welfare and the revival of its people's cultural heritage. The peoples of the entire world sided with the Palestinian people in its just cause, and in November 1974 the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3237 (XXIX), affirming the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination without external interference and its right to national independence and sovereignty in the same manner as the other peoples of the world and granting the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the status of United Nations observer.

"The past four decades have amply demonstrated that any effort to achieve peace in the region will be in vain or of limited effect if it fails to concentrate on a practical solution acceptable to the Palestinian people — one that is based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) — and that a double-standard policy in the Middle East will only further complicate the situation. Today, after more than a year of peace negotiations, we can say that the Palestinian side has shown its ability to deal with international developments in full awareness of the fact that peace has its own requirements. The objectivity and earnestness with which the Palestinian side submitted its positions has played a role in mobilizing greater support from those Powers that have international influence. On the other side, however, the Israeli negotiators — during the Likud Administration — have continued to shift and procrastinate in order to

gain time and postpone a settlement. Even Yitzhak Shamir himself acknowledged, after his fall from power in the recent Israeli elections, that it had been his intention to draw out the negotiations for more than 10 years or until the settlement of the rest of the occupied Arab territories was complete.

"Many had expected the Israeli negotiators' attitude to change after the Labour Party came into power. It is obvious, however, that what has been proposed by Yitzhak Rabin and the coalition parties in power with him until now is more closely related to public relations campaigns than it is to a genuine plan for achieving that peace towards which all the peoples of the region aspire, first and foremost the Israeli people, who will be the first to benefit from the establishment of a lasting, just peace in the Middle East.

"All the peoples of the region aspire to peace. We all abide by the principles of the United Nations Charter and are committed to the principles of international law and international legitimacy. Hence we should be able to build a new world order that will respect the interests and ensure the rights of all peoples.

"My best wishes to you in achieving success in your humanitarian mission."

GROUP OF ARAB STATES

H.E. Mr. Hassan Ali Hussain Al-Ni'mah, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations and Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of December

[Original: Arabic]

On behalf of the Group of Arab States in New York, it is a pleasure for me to extend to you all our gratitude for the most commendable efforts being made by the Committee in support of the cause of the Palestinian people, which is struggling to recover its inalienable rights.

Speaking on behalf of my colleagues in the Arab Group and on my own behalf, I wish to thank you all for those efforts, given the circumstances in which the Palestinian people is defending its rights. I should also like to thank Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali for his commendable efforts with regard to the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions and respect for the Charter.

Indeed, we in the Arab Group all hail your efforts. We praise the steps you are taking and hope that they will be pursued. We also hope to see a mobilization of those forces of justice to back the Palestinian cause in the just struggle to recover the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to return and the right to self-determination and the creation of its own independent State, with the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

The Palestinian people, under the legitimate leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, has continued its historic struggle to achieve the implementation of United Nations resolutions for a just and lasting settlement.

[The speaker then read out the message from the Emir of the State of Qatar (see p. 24).]

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

Ms. Colleen McGuire, Esq., of the National Lawyers Guild (United States), representing the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine

On behalf of the Chairman of the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine (ICCP), Mr. Don Betz, and on behalf of approximately 1,300 international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), I thank the United Nations for again organizing this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and for inviting the NGO community to participate in today's ceremony.

Guided by the Palestinian people, NGOs are the grassroots voice of the struggle for a just and peaceful resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. I wish to inform the Committee of three of the many and various activities NGOs have undertaken this past year.

Through our Peace Conference Information Project, the NGO community has received first-hand coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. The in-depth analyses of our correspondent Phyllis Bennis are distributed to NGOs throughout the world. The project offers an invaluable alternative perspective to the minimal and often-distorted coverage of the mainstream media.

The North American NGOs' Fax Tree disseminates urgent action alerts to the NGO network regarding human rights violations in the occupied territories, threats to Palestinian organizations and shifts in occupation policy. In the past year, 32 urgent action alerts went out to approximately 120 NGOs. Recently the Israeli Government ordered the eviction of the Arab villagers of Ramya, inside Israel, so that incoming Russian Jews could settle on lands the Ramyans have lived on for generations. Faxes from NGOs prompted the United States State Department to call the United States Embassy in Tel Aviv, which in turn spoke to Israeli officials. Owing in part to protests by NGOs, the Israeli Government appears to be backing down from displacing the Ramyans, although I should say that that issue is not as yet fully settled.

Our latest Fax-Tree alert is directed against the University of New Haven in Connecticut. On 23 November 1992 the University held a press conference to announce the opening of a branch of its school in the West Bank settlement of El Kana. NGOs have begun to bombard New Haven with faxes explaining the illegality of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories.

On 27 October 1992 the trial of two Palestinians accused of "terrorist activity" began in Los Angeles. Immigration authorities argue that whoever raises funds for an organization deemed "terrorist" is subject to deportation, even when moneys are raised solely for lawful humanitarian ends, such as schools or day-care centres. The trial is currently focusing on whether the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine is a "terrorist organization". It is startling that a court of law would examine what is essentially a political question. Alarmed by the ramifications of this case and by the fact that the United States Government has targeted Palestinians to test its self-serving definition of the term "terrorism", United States NGOs organized a letter campaign to United States Attorney-General William Barr asking him to drop the charges. Approximately 100 organizations signed on to the Barr letter. We are also sending a letter to President-elect Bill Clinton requesting that his Administration cease prosecuting this McCarthyite case.

Those are a few of the activities NGOs undertook in 1992 and which we will follow up in 1993.

Now, I wish to say a little about the year 1992. It is an anniversary year for two peoples struggling for self-determination. It marks the 500th year of European settlement on Native American lands. It also marks the twenty-fifth year of Israeli occupation of Palestinian land in the West Bank and Gaza. Native American and Palestinian sovereignty struggles share a key feature. Both peoples have resided on their respective lands for centuries, and both peoples lost the bulk of their lands to European settler-colonial States with little or no compensation.

Just as Native Americans are indigenous to the Americas, so too are Palestinians indigenous to historic Palestine. Although throughout history Jews have maintained a presence in Palestine, it cannot be said that the Jewish people, per se, are indigenous to that area. Apart from Biblical times, their numbers had always been negligible relative to the Palestinian population.

Compared to the history of European settlement in the Americas, only recently did historic Palestine acquire a massive European presence. It began when European Jews immigrated to Palestine in the 1880s and culminated with a flood of European Jewish refugees around the time of the Second World War. As a result of United Nations resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, these European settlers and refugees acquired sovereignty over 57 per cent of historic Palestine. An additional 20 per cent of historic Palestine was captured by the new State of Israel in the 1948 war. The remaining 23 per cent of historic Palestine has been occupied by Israel since June of 1967.

Native Americans and Palestinians both seek to recover lands held illegally or taken fraudulently by foreign nations. Native Americans currently exercise a limited form of sovereignty over a mere 2.5 per cent of their original two-billion-acre land base, having lost 97.5 per cent of their land to European settlers. Palestinians currently exercise no sovereignty over any part of their original land base, most particularly over lands illegally occupied since 1967.

Some may think litigation a quixotic pursuit for American Indians, given an inherent impartiality of courts controlled by the expropriating Power. Yet a recent settlement giving the Hopi Nation 400,000 acres of land underscores the United States Government's ability, "if it chooses to do so, to give public land, for example national parks, to the Indians".* That victory is good news for other Indian land claims pending in federal courts, but it also serves to embolden and strengthen all indigenous land struggles.

Palestinians, unlike Native Americans, have no legal forum to adjudicate their land rights. They are forced to pursue their land and sovereignty rights through negotiations engineered by the United States. Again, hardly an impartial mediator, given that the United States Government subsidizes the Israeli Government with over $3 billion a year. In 1988 the Palestine National Council (PNC) demanded the withdrawal of Israel from territories it occupies and declared those territories an independent Palestinian State. International law is unequivocally on the side of the Declaration by PNC. It is only a matter of when — not if — the United States and its client State, Israel, accept and apply the enshrined principles of the law of nations to the Palestinian people.

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* The New York Times, 25 November 1992.

White people of European origin exercise inordinate control over the indigenous people of the United States and occupied Palestine. Let us be clear that it is white European Jews, known as Ashkenazims, who have always held power in Israel. Non-white Jews, whom I call Jews of colour, from North Africa, Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Ethiopia and so forth, are relegated to the lower rungs of Israeli society, although they are not as oppressed as Israeli Arabs. Israeli policies, formed largely by white Jews, blatantly deny Palestinians fundamental human rights, especially self-determination. Such discriminating policies arise from a racism that many whites, be they Israeli or American, have long held towards peoples of colour whose lands they coveted and aggressively, if not illegally, acquired.

In 1992 Native Americans demonstrated their righteous resistance to 500 years of genocide and European settlement on their lands. In 1992 Palestinians heroically endured a quarter century of a brutal military and foreign occupation of their lands. Only through full and complete sovereignty, which must include Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza and a voting seat at the United Nations, can Palestinians look back on 1992 as an anniversary year worthy of celebration.

III. Messages received on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

A. Messages from heads of State or Government

AFGHANISTAN

H.E. Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani, Chairman of the Leadership Council and President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I wish to take this solemn occasion and once again reiterate strong support of the Government and people of Afghanistan to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, as well as its legitimate right to establish its own Palestinian State.

The commemoration of this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People with the struggling people of Palestine revives memories of the long heroic resistance of the Palestinians associated with enormous sufferings. This occasion is also a manifestation of solid international support for the cause of Palestine.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan continues to consider the Palestinian question as the core of the Middle East conflict. There can be no peace and tranquillity, or the assurance of human rights in the Middle East as long as the undeniable rights of the Palestinian people are not respected and realized.

The United Nations, on the basis of its Charter principles, has a responsibility toward the full realization of the rights of the Palestinian people.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan, as a loyal member of the United Nations, will continue to discharge its responsibilities in support of the Charter principles, as well as resolutions pertaining to the Palestinian cause.

The total and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, should continue to constitute as the basis of any solution to the Middle East conflict.

As a member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Islamic State of Afghanistan will continue to strive towards the mobilization and further strengthening of international support for the realization of the mandate of the Committee.

ALBANIA

H.E. Mr. Aleksander Meksi, Prime Minister of Albania

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I convey to you, on behalf of the Albanian people and Government, and on my personal behalf, the best wishes for peace and happiness of the Palestinian people.

I express my belief that our epoch we live in will open new perspectives for the fulfilling of the aspirations of this martyred people.

The present round of talks on the solution of the Palestinian problem is a testimony of the good will of all sides to deal with this questions with wisdom and dialogue and brings about hope for its solution.

BAHRAIN

His Majesty Sheikh Isa Bin Sulman Al Khalifa, Emir of the State of Bahrain

[Original: Arabic]

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People stirs the acutest feelings of anguish and sorrow in the depths of the Arab soul and of human conscience, reminding them of the sacrifices and struggles undergone by the Palestinian people on the paths to freedom and independence over a period spanning more than four decades since the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, by which it divided Palestine into two independent countries: a Palestinian Arab State and a Jewish State. Although this resolution provided Israel with its international birth certificate, Israel has, ever since its establishment and consequent Judaization of Palestinian lands in pursuit of its expansionist Zionist ambitions, impeded and obstructed the establishment of the Palestinian State and prevented it from developing into an independent nation exercising sovereignty over all its national territory.

Established Palestinian national rights are the subject of an international consensus and are endorsed by all nations and peoples. Many international resolutions have been adopted in that connection. First and foremost among such rights is the right to self-determination, which is a principle enshrined in Article 1, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations. However, Israel, despite its participation in the seven rounds of multilateral Middle East peace talks with Arab and Palestinian parties which began with the Madrid Conference on 30 October 1991, is continuing to delay, to prevaricate and to treat legitimate Palestinian rights in isolation from their political aspects, i.e. the fundamental demand, endorsed by all peace-loving forces, that land be exchanged for peace. Israel's persistent obduracy, bigotry and determination to maintain its occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories have come to constitute a threat to the peace process in which the peoples of the region have invested their hopes.

The State of Bahrain affirms its commitment to the principles of the Charter and of universal human rights and its belief that members of the international community must abide by those principles. It urges the cessation of all Israeli violations and inhuman practices, as well as of all forms of abuse and oppression against the steadfast Palestinian people, which has been courageously resisting the arsenal of Zionist weaponry with a handful of stones since 9 December 1987. If Israel really desires a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, it has no choice but clearly to accept Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which emphasize the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and call for a withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes an inalienable part of sacred Palestinian national soil.

We take this important opportunity to express on behalf of the State of Bahrain, from the tribune of the United Nations, our abundant gratitude and deep appreciation to the Chairman and members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for their intensive efforts to secure victory for the Palestinian cause. We look forward to the establishment of security, peace and stability in the Middle East.

BANGLADESH

H.E. Mrs. Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

On this day of solidarity with the people of Palestine, the Government and the people of Bangladesh join me in reaffirming our unwavering support and total commitment for its just cause and the realization of its inalienable rights.

The situation in Palestine is one of the greatest tragedies of the contemporary world and still remains at the core of the Middle East problems. The Bangladesh position on the Middle East question remain consistent and categorical. Bangladesh rejects any imposed status quo and reiterates that usurpation of rights perpetuated against the Palestinian people calls for an urgent solution on the basis of United Nations resolutions and especially that of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and 343.

Over the years, an international consensus has emerged based on cardinal precepts of the United Nations that the acquisition of territory by force is not permissible under international law, that no country should enjoy the fruits of aggression and that no people can be denied of its inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination. We believe a just and durable peace can only be built in the Middle East if we adhere to the above internationally accepted basic precepts.

Bangladesh welcomed and support the launching of the Middle East peace negotiations last year. It was our hope that a comprehensive solution based on fairness, equity and justice would soon be worked out. We are hopeful that the slow pace of the negotiating process could be accelerated to bring about a just, durable and comprehensive solution of the issue which should, among others, include withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, in accordance with the wishes and aspirations of the Palestinian people.

BURKINA FASO

H.E. Mr. Blaise Campaoré, President, Head of State and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Burkina Faso

[Original: French]

The commemoration on 30 November of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People offers me an opportunity to express the deep concern of my country at this tragic situation which has continued to claim victims since 1947.

Indeed, shortly after the United Nations voted on 29 November 1947 to partition the territory between Jews and Palestinians, these two communities engaged in open warfare which reached its climax in 1967.

This decisive turning-point in the history of the Near East remains engraved in our memories and provides a frame of reference for the Palestinian community which has long been fighting to recover the homeland from which it was expelled.

None of us can remain indifferent to the sad plight of this people.

For its part, Burkina Faso has on several occasions concretely manifested its support for this struggle by the Palestinian people to recover its legitimate right to self-determination.

Once again this year, my country, speaking through me, reaffirms its support for the defence of the rights of peoples and its solidarity with the Palestinian people and its political leadership, the PLO, in their struggle for freedom and independence.

Through this Committee which you chair I congratulate the United Nations as a whole for its efforts to bring peace to the Near East.

I am also confident that the Secretary-General of the United Nations will continue to use every means at his disposal and all his skills to bring about a negotiated solution to this crisis.

I strongly appeal to the parties to the conflict to uphold and promote the path of dialogue, which is the only path that can lead to a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region. In this connection, it is my hope that the negotiations begun at Madrid and now continuing at Washington will have a successful conclusion.

It is also my hope that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People will meet this major challenge to humanity.

CAMBODIA

H.E. Mr. Norodom Sihanouk, Head of State and President of the Supreme National Council of Cambodia

[Original: French]

On the occasion of the commemoration on 30 November 1992 of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I have the honour solemnly to affirm once again the full and steadfast support of the people of Cambodia for the just cause of the Palestinian people and for the heroic and highly patriotic struggle being waged by the PLO under the chairmanship of His Excellency Yasser Arafat, Head of the State of Palestine, in order to defend all the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the liberation of Palestinian lands and towns under foreign occupation. Cambodia wishes victory to the fraternal Palestinian people, the PLO and President Yasser Arafat.

CHINA

H.E. Mr. Li Peng, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China

On the occasion of the convocation of the meeting commemorating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I wish to extend, on behalf of the Chinese Government and people, our warm congratulations to the meeting and our high regards to the Palestinian people.

The Chinese Government and people have always supported the Palestinian people's just struggles for regaining its legitimate national rights, and appreciated the positive efforts made by the Palestine Liberation Organization in promoting a political settlement of the Middle East question. At present, the Middle East peace process has entered a new stage. Thanks to the joint efforts made by the parties concerned and the international community, the Middle East peace talks are gradually gaining in depth, thereby opening up new prospects with the question of Palestine at its heart.

I hope the meeting will contribute to the promotion of a just and reasonable settlement of the Middle East question at an early date.

CUBA

H.E. Mr. Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Council of State and Government of the Republic of Cuba

[Original: Spanish]

Our observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People coincides with a crescendo in international calls for the most expeditious and just solution of the Middle East conflict and of the core of that conflict, the question of Palestine.

For years the United Nations, and particularly the Committee over which you worthily preside, has been exerting enormous efforts in an attempt to attain this objective.

Nevertheless, the Palestinian people, as the victim of an injustice, continues to endure both occupation and exile. The injustice must be ended in order to enable this long-suffering people fully to exercise its rights.

The heroic Palestinian people has displayed an unswerving determination to struggle for the attainment of its national objectives. One of the most splendid feats of its history may be seen in the intifadah, which, at the cost of tremendous sacrifices, has boosted the respect and admiration of Cuba and the international community for this just cause.

I take this opportunity, Mr. Chairman, to reiterate that you can always count on support from the Cuban Government and people to promote any initiative conducive to the promptest restitution of the Palestinian people's legitimate rights and to bringing peace to this troubled region of the world.

CYPRUS

H.E. Mr. George Vassiliou, President of the Republic of Cyprus

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I would like to recall once again on behalf of the Government and the people of Cyprus and myself our firm and constant support for the just struggle of the Palestinian people to achieve its inalienable rights.

The struggle of the Palestinian people is a struggle for justice, human dignity and freedom. Together with the international community we reaffirm our solidarity with the Palestinian right to self-determination and the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people to a sovereign and independent State. We believe that no just, viable and lasting solution to the Middle East problem can be achieved unless the rights of the Palestinian people are fully taken into consideration.

Cyprus supports the current peace process as an important opening and an opportunity for real progress. Such progress must be on the basis of United Nations Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). We urge all sides to sustain the efforts towards a comprehensive and just solution involving all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict which would offer new hope to all the peoples of the region for a peaceful and prosperous future.

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

H.E. Mr. Kim Il Sung, President of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I extend firm solidarity to you, the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian people on behalf of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Korean people and on my own behalf.

Today, the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, are vigorously striving to regain the usurped territory and to establish a Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital.

The Korean people stand firmly on the side of the fighting Palestinian people and will, in the future too, actively support and encourage your just cause to recover all the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

Believing that the friendly relations between our two peoples will further strengthen and develop, I take this opportunity to sincerely wish you and the Palestinian people greater successes in the struggle for the accomplishment of the cause of Palestine.

EGYPT

H.E. Mr. Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, I am pleased to convey my thanks to you and to all the members of the Committee for your valuable efforts to promote awareness of the just cause of the Palestinian people and for the support you are providing to Palestinians in the search for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East that will ensure the welfare of its peoples.

The Palestinian people has made constant sacrifices in the course of its struggle to assert its just demands and to exercise its legitimate rights. On the occasion of this year's celebration of solidarity with the Palestinian people, we see a glimmer of hope that peace may once again brighten the Middle East region and that Palestinians may come closer to seeing their legitimate national aspirations fulfilled.

The International Peace Conference held at Madrid at the end of October 1991 led to the beginning of serious negotiations between the parties to the Arab/Israeli conflict on the basis of the real substance of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), i.e. the return of the occupied Arab territories to their legitimate owners in exchange for the peace, security and stability of all nations and peoples of the region and the exercise by the Palestinian people of its legitimate political rights.

Representatives of the Palestinian people are participating in both the bilateral and the multilateral negotiations with a view to achieving a peace which will guarantee that people's legitimate political rights, including its right to join in determining the shape of future cooperation in the Middle East region, in the interests of the development and welfare of its peoples.

Egypt welcomes the participation of the United Nations in the multilateral talks on regional problems in the Middle East. Its presence reflects a recognition by all the parties concerned that the international community and the world Organization bear a responsibility for the achievement of a just and comprehensive settlement of those problems, including the problem of Palestine refugees, a just solution of which must constitute an inseparable part of any final peace agreement, as specified in the Security Council resolutions.

Egypt believes that all parties must seize this unique opportunity to attain a comprehensive and equitable peace in the Middle East and a just settlement of the question of Palestine. The international community must support the parties concerned and encourage them to overcome the obstacles to a peaceful solution. Egypt is confident of the international community's ability to assume its responsibilities in this regard, and this should create suitable conditions for the conclusion of a just and lasting settlement based on respect for the principles of international law and the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations and on recognition of the Palestinian people's legitimate political and national rights.

The principles on which the United Nations was established, in particular the right of peoples to self-determination and the exercise of their basic rights, are principles which must be applied equally to all the peoples of the region. Among those peoples, the Palestinian people is still looking forward to a better future when it may exercise its inalienable right to self-determination.

Finally, I should like to reiterate my thanks to your esteemed Committee and to assure you and all its members of our appreciation and support for your sincere and noble efforts.

GUINEA

H.E. General Lansana Conte, President of the Republic of Guinea

[Original: French]

As in previous years, and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 32/40/B of 2 December 1977, the international community will observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November 1992. My country is following with great interest the peace negotiations launched at the meeting at Madrid. The solution to the Middle East conflict requires the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which are recognized as the cornerstone of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. The Palestinian question, which lies at the very heart of this conflict, is a major concern of the international community. Accordingly, the United Nations bears a historic responsibility in the efforts to restore to the Palestinian people its legitimate national rights.

As a member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People since its establishment, the Republic of Guinea, more than ever before, intends to spare no effort to contribute within the framework of the Committee's mandate to promoting a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian question on the basis of respect for the relevant resolutions and the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law.

INDIA

H.E. Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, Prime Minister of India

The commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People symbolizes the indomitable courage and aspirations of the people of Palestine who have struggled long and hard for its legitimate rights. On this occasion, I would like to reiterate India's consistent and unequivocal support for the Palestinian cause. India has always believed that there can be no durable peace or stability in the Middle East without a just and comprehensive settlement which addresses fully the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

The current negotiations in both the bilateral and multilateral tracks of the Middle East peace process offer a unique opportunity to reach a settlement in the long-standing issues. It is our sincere hope that in the changed international landscape, all parties to this process of dialogue will seize this historic opportunity to find a just and peaceful fulfillment of the aspirations of the Palestinians. India will continue to lend its full support to this process.

IRAN

H.E. Mr. Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran

In the name of the God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is an opportune time to offer my greetings to the pure spirits of the martyrs of the Palestinian movement and to wish every success for the freedom fighters of this sacred territory.

The question of Palestine has drawn the attention not only of all Muslims, but also of all freedom- and justice-seeking people of the world, due to the magnitude of tyranny and oppression imposed on Palestinians by the occupying regime of Quds.

The legitimate rights of Palestinians, foremost of which is the right to self-determination, have not been realized yet, despite all international efforts, the inhuman measures of the occupying regime continue, rendering it impossible for the oppressed people of Palestine to enjoy the developments implied by the international efforts.

Thus, after enduring years of oppression and torture conducted by the occupying regime of Quds, as well as fruitless expectations from measures taken by the United Nations, the Muslim people of Palestine initiated an all-out uprising — intifadah — the reasonable result of the lofty sentiments of a nation that realized that fighting a grassroots struggle is the only way to restore its trampled rights.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has always expressed its all-out support for the Palestinian movement, praising its uprising against the oppressive acts of the Zionist regime. Our support will continue consistently until the full realization of the undeniable and legitimate rights of the Palestinian nation, including the right to self-determination, the liberation of the occupied territories, particularly Quds, which is the coexistent centre for all celestial religions, and the unity of Palestine, resulting the formation of an independent Palestinian State.

To this end, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is a particularly appropriate moment to further focus the attention of world public opinion on the Palestine question and to bring about a movement to liberate the Palestinians from the oppression of the usurper regime of Quds.

JORDAN

His Majesty King Hussein Bin Talal of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

[Original: Arabic]

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

The annual commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which takes place at the initiative of your esteemed Committee, is a good occasion to state the international commitment to halt the injustice and aggression against the Palestinian people which result from Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian territories and denial of that people's right to self-determination. The commemoration both confirms the resolve of the United Nations and the international community to persist in their labours to redress the oppression and injustice inflicted on Palestinians and expresses their faith in the effective application of the principles of international law.

You are well aware how the partition of Palestine led to an explosion of the Arab-Israeli conflict, causing the initial expulsion of huge numbers of Palestinians and subsequent subjection of the remainder to occupation. The consequences of this conflict have not ceased to cause misery and suffering to Palestinians; indeed, all peoples of the region have undergone similar suffering as a result of the violence, wars and confrontations associated with the conflict. Their suffering has been more acute and more protracted because the conflict became institutionalized when the Middle East, with its strategic position and abundant oil resources, became an arena for international confrontation in the cold war. Ambitious and grasping forces, at both regional and international levels, used the conflict to advance their own agenda, and the question of Palestine became a part of the regional and international conflict in the region.

We continue, as we have done in the past, to hope that the end of the cold war and the rivalry between East and West which prevailed over the past four decades will lead to the curtailment of regional conflicts, including the Middle East conflict, thus putting an end to the Palestinian tragedy. This faith in and enthusiasm for action to relieve the sufferings of Palestinians and all the peoples of the region are among the major reasons why we welcomed the relaxation of international tension, hoping to see confirmation of the accompanying slogans and promises of commitment to international legitimacy, support for coexistence, rejection of the use of force for the settlement of international disputes, defence of freedom and human rights, and strengthening of democracy and cooperation.

Accordingly, we were among the first to endorse the efforts of the United States, undertaken jointly with Russia, to launch the Middle East peace process as desired by the international community. Jordan did what it could to help create the conditions required for the convening of the Madrid Middle East Peace Conference, just as it had done all it could to support the Palestinian people and to defend its rights and existence through all the different stages of the conflict. Our conviction that it was right to opt for peace was strengthened by our belief in the rightness of the Arab cause, the legitimacy of the Palestinian struggle, the importance of coexistence and mutual understanding among peoples and nations and the need to preserve international credibility and the principles of law.

Now that more than one year has elapsed since the beginning of peace talks between the Arab parties and Israel, the anniversary of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian Arab People approaches with that people still enduring the cruelty of the occupation. It is still prevented from exercising its national and political rights on its national soil and continues to seek recognition of those of its rights which, as confirmed and guaranteed under international law, may not be ignored, violated or simply allowed to lapse with the passing of time.

Although, when the results of the recent Israeli elections were announced, we believed that the majority of the people of Israel did desire peace, Israel has not so far provided any evidence of a genuine desire or of a realistic and bold assessment of the requirements for peace. Its delegations have not come to the negotiating table with anything new that would inspire optimism or give reassurance. In fact, we see a continued denial of the Palestinian people's national rights and repeated attempts to ignore international legitimacy in the form of Security Council resolution 242 (1967), which is the basis on which the Madrid Conference was convened.

The direct talks which Israel demanded were launched, with the consent of all parties, and they constitute an appropriate mechanism by which to bring about a political solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, the extremely slow pace of these talks cannot be interpreted as serving any purpose other than procrastination and time-wasting. This postpones the dawning of peace; in fact, it gives free rein to despair and pessimism and provides opportunities, at this crucial and critical juncture, for the forces of darkness lurking in expectation of failure to gain ever more strength and to drag the entire region and its peoples towards certain disaster.

We firmly believe that the Palestinian people's participation in the Peace Conference and the talks under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, its sole legitimate representative, is an act by which it exercises its right to self-determination in its territory. Its independent decision to engage in the talks is also an expression of that right, as recognized by the international community. The international community now realizes that the time has come to end the long sufferings of the Palestinians, in the course of which their rights have been violated on a massive scale incompatible with human rights and the precepts of international law.

The Gulf War proved that Palestinians are not safe living in the diaspora and that their own entity must be established. The Palestinian people still needs the support of the international community if it is to wrest back its legitimate rights from the clutches of the occupation. Active involvement on the part of all United Nations agencies is required to support the peace process, especially since the Organization's international legitimacy forms the basis on which the talks are taking place. The Security Council, with its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, while playing a major role in a conflict which is geographically and politically associated with the Arab-Israeli conflict, continues to be excluded from an effective role in connection with the latter conflict.

We in Jordan took the lead in supporting the Palestinian people and in backing the efforts of their representatives as required. The umbrella provided by the joint delegation was just one aspect of Jordan's support for and solidarity with the Palestinian people and did not represent any new departure in the close association between our two fraternal peoples. It was also an expression of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan's eagerness to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace to end the Arab-Israeli dispute and settle the question of Palestine in accordance with international law, thus fulfilling the Palestinian people's hopes and aspirations to self-determination and ensuring its freedom to follow the path it chooses, including its right to establish its own independent State on its national soil, while maintaining Arab rights, first and foremost among which is the restoration of Arab sovereignty over Arab Jerusalem.

In conclusion, I request that you and all the members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People accept our thanks and appreciation for your virtuous efforts to defend the Palestinian people's national and political rights. Such benevolent efforts constitute a defence of the principles of right, justice and legitimacy.

May peace be upon you and the mercy of God and his blessings.

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

H.E. Mr. Khamtay Siphandone, Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic

[Original: French]

On this solemn occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I wish, on behalf of the Government and people of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, to extend to you and to the distinguished members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People my warmest congratulations and best wishes for success in your noble task.

The situation in the Middle East today remains explosive and continues to pose a grave threat to international peace and security. Israel continues to occupy Palestinian and other Arab territories and to pursue its annexationist policy and practices, including the establishment of new settlements, the confiscation of land and the diversion of water resources.

The martyr Palestinian people continues to endure great suffering, and no effort must be spared to put an end to the conflict in the Middle East, at the heart of which lies the Palestinian question. We wish to reiterate our belief that there can be no comprehensive and just settlement of this problem without the participation, on an equal footing, of all the parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole representative of the Palestinian people. We therefore look forward anxiously to a successful outcome to the current negotiations between the various parties concerned which would provide for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable national rights, including the right of return, the right to self-determination and national independence, and the right to establish a sovereign and independent State in Palestine.

The Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic takes this opportunity to reaffirm its unwavering support for the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the PLO, in its heroic struggle for the triumph of its just cause — the recovery of its fundamental national rights.

MALAYSIA

H.E. Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia

Malaysia joins the international community today in commemorating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. We would like to reaffirm our continuing support of the just struggle of the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights to self-determination and an independent State.

The promises of the Middle East peace process which commenced last year is still far from achieving significant results in resolving the long-standing Palestinian problem. The high expectations of the international community following the change in the Government of Israel remain unfulfilled. Only strong persistent international pressure can move the Israelis to be more forthcoming in the negotiations. In this regard, the role of the United Nations, including the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which has been carrying out commendable efforts over the years, must be further intensified. The Committee, with the support of the United Nations infrastructure, has to keep the Palestinian issue in the forefront of public consciousness especially within the United States of America and in Europe.

Malaysia regards the recent appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the Middle East peace talks as an important step that heralds more active and focussed efforts as catalysts to accelerate the peace process. This will be in line with the consensus of the international community to see the United Nations more involved in the negotiations. The Security Council must be made to fulfill its responsibilities — the many facets of the Palestinian issue, including one related to the protection of the welfare of Palestinians under Israeli illegal occupation. There are important resolutions passed by the General Assembly and the Security Council which cry out for implementation.

Even as the international community is anxious to see progress in the current Middle East peace process, the Israeli authorities must be told that the continuing repressive measures used by Israeli forces in the occupied territories is totally unacceptable. Malaysia believes that the time has come for the Security Council to send United Nations military observers to the occupied territories as their presence would not only deter excessive use of force by Israeli authorities but would assist confidence-building, conducive to the ongoing peace talks.

On this occasion also, we wish to reaffirm our strong and continued support for the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in consolidating international efforts in fighting for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

MALDIVES

H.E. Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Republic of Maldives

The international community is at present faced with a number of unresolved crises and challenges, foremost among which is finding a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine that would ensure the regaining by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, including its right to create a homeland on its national soil.

The Palestinian cause has always occupied a significant place in the mind and heart of every Maldavian. We have every admiration for our gallant brothers and sisters, the Palestinians, for the courage and determination they have shown in the face of the blatant atrocities that have been committed against them over four decades.

Over the past years, we have followed developments in the occupied territories with grave concern, but not without hope. The current Arab-Israeli peace talks have heralded the beginning of a new era of conciliation which could hopefully enable the parties concerned to work out a peaceful and mutually acceptable settlement to the conflict. It is our sincere hope that the new opportunities for peace provided by the peace talks will not be allowed to slip away.

On this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the people of the Maldives reaffirms its wholehearted support to and solidarity with the brotherly people of Palestine in its just struggle for the restoration of its national homeland and all its inalienable rights. We further renew our commitment to participate in all the efforts which the Islamic world and the larger international community may embark upon with the objective of helping to find a just and permanent settlement to the issue.

MALTA

H.E. Dr. Edward Fenech Adami, Prime Minister of Malta

Over the last 25 years, the international community has observed 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

This particular date was chosen because of its special significance for the question of Palestine. It was on 29 November 1947 that the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II) on the partition of Palestine. Forty-five years later, only one of the States intended by that resolution is in being. The Palestinian people, numbering 6 million, over 2 million of which live under occupation, and the rest scattered throughout the globe, are still awaiting the achievement of its inalienable right to a homeland of its own.

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People has a two-fold objective: to draw the urgent attention of the international community to the continuing plight of the Palestinian people, and to mobilize international public opinion in support of a peaceful settlement of the question in order to enable the Palestinian people to recover and fully exercise its inalienable rights.

Over a year has passed since the launching of the Madrid peace process which brought to the long-festering problem of Palestine the first ray of hope in many years. So far the hopes and expectations raised by this welcome initiative have not been fulfilled. A number of developments have however occurred over the second half of 1992 which, in spite of the disappointments to date, keep alive the hope for a peacefully negotiated settlement which would bring a just and lasting solution to all the issues involved.

As an active participant in the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People since its inception, Malta remains deeply committed to the endeavour to bring about a peaceful achievement of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. We believe that the patient and persistent work of the Committee over the years, together with the unswerving support of the United Nations Secretary-General, have helped to lay the necessary groundwork on which the present initiatives can be built.

On this day of commemoration, the Government of Malta reaffirms its solidarity with the Palestinian people in its just endeavour to exercise its inalienable rights. We admire the steadfastness, courage and tenacity which the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, have demonstrated over the years. We recognize the sacrifices and suffering they have endured and continue to endure. We urge the international community to redouble its efforts to achieve a solution to the tragic problem of Palestine and in the meantime, to extend to the Palestinian people in the occupied territory all the necessary measures for its protection provided under international law.

We are not unaware that a new spirit seems to be emerging, but this has to be backed by courage and positive thinking, especially by all the parties directly concerned, so that the Palestinian people may see evidence that the road of the peaceful settlement of disputes is appreciated and can lead to gratifying results which have been denied them so far.

PAKISTAN

H.E. Mr. Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Pakistan joins the international community today in commemorating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Pakistan has consistently supported the Palestinian people in its struggle to achieve its national rights which include its right to return, to self-determination, and to an independent State in Palestine, with Jerusalem as its capital.

We laud the untiring efforts of the Palestinian leadership for achieving a just and comprehensive peace. Their constructive attitude in the Middle East Peace Conference is a manifestation of their sincerity in working for a fair and equitable settlement.

On behalf of the Government and the people of Pakistan and on my own behalf, I renew our pledge of continued and unequivocal support to, and solidarity with, our Palestinian brothers in their valiant struggle to achieve their inalienable rights. We call upon the international community to press for an end to Israeli repression in the occupied territories and to ensure that it complies with the United Nations resolutions which have repeatedly called for the restoration of the national rights of the Palestinian people.

QATAR

His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar

[Original: Arabic]

Once again a meeting is being held to proclaim the solidarity of peoples of the world with the Palestinian people in its just cause. As a peace- and justice-loving people, I should like to take this opportunity to reiterate our dedication to freedom, which the Palestinian people must also enjoy as do all other peoples of the world.

Since the observance of this Day last year, the peace negotiations have not made any progress towards guaranteeing the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, owing to Israel's stubbornness and its persistence in clinging to outmoded concepts that are incompatible with today's world.

The Arab side has accepted the principle of two States on the historic soil of Palestine; it has also accepted that the principle of Israeli security be taken into consideration. Hence the Israeli side has no cause to continue in its obstinacy and refusal to accept the resolutions. With the acceptance of these two points, there are other aspects which could be settled in the negotiations under way in the current peace process. We are optimistic concerning the peace process. We hope that it will be reactivated with the coming of a new American Administration next January. But we wish to issue a warning that the peace process might turn into a goal in itself and that the fact that attempts are being made to achieve this result might move us away from the principles of the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on the recognition of the rights of the Palestinian people, withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories and guaranteeing the peace and security of all States of the region. The peace process can continue only if tangible results are achieved. We urge the parties to the negotiations to take this into consideration, so that this historic opportunity will not be missed and an end may be put to a conflict which has lasted for more than half a century and resulted in the loss of many lives and of countless human and material resources.

Qatar reaffirms its support for the uprising of the Palestinian people and for its continued resistance to Israeli occupation and Israeli practices, which have been condemned by the United Nations and by international public opinion. We are confident that this people that have suffered so long will finally recover its inalienable rights and enjoy freedom and independence in the near future.

In conclusion, I should like to express to you, Sir, my gratitude for the work of your Committee and for the efforts made to support the Palestinian cause and to make the peoples of the world appreciate the true dimensions of that cause. This will help in increasing the base of international support for that cause. We hope that in the near future we will be able to achieve a just settlement of the problem of the Palestinian people that would sanctify these inalienable rights in a just and lasting peace and have positive consequences for all the peoples of the Middle East.

We wish the Committee ever greater success in carrying out its noble task.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

H.E. Mr. Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation

[Original: Russian]

[Addressed to the President of the State of Palestine, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Mr. Yasser Arafat]

Mr. President, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I convey my best wishes to you and to the entire Palestinian people and express my hope that it will be able, at the earliest possible date, to exercise its national rights.

As one of the sponsors of the peace process, the Russian Federation will continue its active efforts to reach a comprehensive and lasting settlement in the Middle East and to find a solution to the Palestinian problem.

I am confident that the leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organization will continue in the future to follow a realistic and constructive course, consistent with the interests of the Palestinian people and conduce to progress towards peace, security and stability in the Middle East.

SAUDI ARABIA

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd Bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud, King of Saudi Arabia

[Original: Arabic]

Each year on this day, the international community gathered at the United Nations expresses its support for the Palestinian people, a people whose rights have been usurped and which has suffered as cruelly as any people can possibly suffer in a tragedy that has lasted for more than 45 years. It continues either to languish under the Israeli occupation of its land and the land of its fathers and ancestors or to be dispersed in refugee camps awaiting the day when it can return to its land and exercise its legitimate right to a State where it can enjoy citizenship and a country in which it can live.

On this occasion, I address to you my best wishes that God will crown the work of your Committee with success, and I express our esteem for the role played by your Committee in the international arena in mobilizing support for the Palestinian people so that it may secure its legitimate national rights and for the efforts you are making at the behest of the United Nations to expose the injustice and iniquity inflicted on the Palestinian people.

As it witnesses the intifadah of the Palestinian people in the face of Israeli occupation, the international community is called upon today, more than ever before, to strive for a halt to the violations and crimes that are being committed by the occupation authorities against the Palestinian people in violation of international conventions and covenants. We are grateful, in this connection, for the efforts of your Committee in endeavouring to inform the Members of the United Nations of the facts of the problem and of the extent of its importance and urgency.

The commitment of those of us in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the cause of the Palestinian people is one of principle and one that has been constant and unwavering. It is a commitment that arose with the onset of the Palestine issue, and it is one that has endured and will endure until the Palestinian people secures its rights.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has expressed its full conviction that peace, stability, development and prosperity in the Middle East region cannot be achieved as long as the Palestinian people is not accorded its full rights, and it has supported every well-intentioned endeavour to end the suffering of the Palestinian people and bring peace to the Middle East region on the basis of the resolutions of the United Nations. It welcomed the convening of the Peace Conference on the Middle East at Madrid in October 1991 under the auspices of the United States of America and the Russian Federation and the subsequent bilateral negotiations between the Arab parties and Israel and the multilateral negotiations. It is hopeful that Israel will comply with international legitimacy and will desist from its procrastination in implementing United Nations resolutions.

As we stand today on the threshold of a new international order in which cooperation and understanding are replacing tension and polarization, in which crises are being confronted and outstanding problems solved and in which renewed stress is being placed on the inalienable right of peoples to independence, we call upon the United Nations to assume its responsibility and to defend its resolutions.

It is the Palestinian people's due from all members of the international community that its plight be brought to an end, that it be enabled to secure its rights with all possible moral and material support and that the oppression inflicted upon it be exposed. We express our gratitude to you and to the members of your Committee for the distinguished efforts you are making, with God's help, in this connection, and we wish you continued success.

SENEGAL

H.E. Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of the Republic of Senegal

[Original: French]

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is being celebrated this year at a crucial point in the international community's quest for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the crisis in the Middle East.

The event therefore remains an important one, for in spite of the progress made, the mere mention of the Middle East, the scene of troubles for more than half a century, brings to mind images of widespread tension, cyclical violence and an inextricable conflict at the heart of which lies the question of Palestine.

That is why the launching at Madrid more than a year ago of direct negotiations between all the parties to the conflict raised hope around the world of a decisive movement towards a peaceful negotiated settlement.

This undertaking is all the more auspicious in that, notwithstanding the obstacles encountered and the evident mutual fear and suspicion, it has initiated a dialogue and fostered the establishment of an overall framework of consultation and negotiation that should be encouraged and supported so that the Palestinian people may at last exercise its legitimate and inalienable right to self-determination and independence, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Experience has shown that at this stage in such a process, confidence-building measures are necessary to break down psychological barriers so that, in a spirit of realism and political courage, all parties may dedicate themselves to reconciliation and the building of a just and lasting peace.

From this point of view, the declared intentions of the new Israeli Government are certainly encouraging, but they should be backed up by such concrete action as a total halt to the colonization of occupied Arab and Palestinian lands, the release of Palestinian political prisoners and an end to acts of violence and the brutal repression of the intifadah.

Today more than ever the valiant Palestinian people needs the vigilant and unflagging support of all peace- and justice-loving nations in order to advance its noble cause for which it is waging a heroic struggle under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, its sole legitimate representative.

I hope that this appeal will be heeded, and I should like to take the opportunity afforded me by this commemorative day to hail the vital role played by the United Nations in supporting the just cause of the Palestinians and to pay deserved homage to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

I should also like to extend anew my congratulations and my warm encouragement to the non-governmental organizations and people of good will all over the world who are making an invaluable contribution to this noble struggle.

Their combined efforts give me reason to hope that this day will mark an important step towards a rapid settlement of the Palestine question.

SPAIN

H.E. Mr. Felipe Gonzalez, Prime Minister of Spain

[Original: Spanish]

In offering my warmest congratulations on the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people, I wish to express to you my Government's desire to see the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on reconciliation between all the peoples of the region and on the exercise of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

The Spanish Government is concerned at the situation in the occupied territories, calls for respect for the human rights of their residents and supports the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.

At the same time, the Spanish Government places its hopes in the peace process initiated one year ago at the Madrid Conference and is confident that gradual progress will be made towards a peace which will necessarily mean reciprocal concessions and which must be based on an appropriate balance between security and justice for all parties.

SRI LANKA

H.E. Mr. Ranasinghe Premadasa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

I am happy to send this message on the occasion of the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

Sri Lanka considers the Palestine question as the core issue of the Middle East problem. These complex issues cannot be resolved without satisfying the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Therefore, the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab territories and the granting of the right of self-determination to the people of Palestine are essential prerequisites to any permanent solution.

It will be recalled that Sri Lanka was one of the earliest countries to accord full recognition to the Palestinian people. Sri Lanka will continue to give its unstinted support for the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

I feel confident that the dialogue initiated in Madrid would lead to the realization of the cherished goals of the Palestinian people. On behalf of the people and Government of Sri Lanka, I extend my best wishes to the people of Palestine in its efforts to restore peace.

SURINAME

H.E. Mr. Runaldo R. Venetiaan, President of the Republic of Suriname

On the solemn occasion of the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I wish, on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Suriname, to reaffirm our commitment and solidarity with the Palestinian people in its heroic struggle for the achievement of its legitimate and inalienable rights.

My Government strongly supports a just, permanent and comprehensive solution to the Middle East problem, the core of which is the question of Palestine.

THAILAND

H.E. Mr. Chuan Leekpai, Prime Minister of Thailand

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I would like, on behalf of the Government and people of Thailand, to reaffirm our steadfast and consistent support for the just and legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian people must be allowed to exercise its inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty.

To this end, Thailand supports the efforts of the United Nations towards a comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian question in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and other relevant United Nations resolutions. We welcome recent developments in the Middle East peace process. The current efforts, initiated at the Madrid Conference in 1991, have created a degree of optimism. We are hopeful that all the participants will negotiate effectively and, in the spirit of compromise, arrive eventually at a satisfactory conclusion.

Thailand remains deeply concerned about the situation in the occupied territories. We would like to reiterate our call for all parties concerned to exercise maximum restraint in dealing with the conflicts in the occupied territories.

I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the invaluable work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. As an observer, Thailand is ready to do whatever it can to support the Committee's commendable endeavours.

TUNISIA

H.E. Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia

[Original: Arabic]

On the occasion of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I address greetings and assurances of esteem to the international Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, because of its ongoing support for the Palestinian people, which has been exposed to long-standing injustice. The time has come to put an end to that injustice in order that it may, like all other peoples, enjoy all its rights, particularly its right to self-determination and to establish its State in its territory, in accordance with international legitimacy and convenants.

The efforts that this international Committee has been assiduously making in order that the international community should always have a clear picture of the woes of occupation suffered by the Palestinian people are significant, splendid and worthy of every commendation and support. We renew on this occasion our full solidarity with the fine efforts of this Committee, and we reaffirm our appreciation of the continuous efforts being made by the United Nations and its organs, in particular the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

The just cause of the Palestinian people is worthy of arousing the concern of the international community and seeing its efforts redoubled with a view to arriving at a just and lasting solution to this question.

Tunisia, which is committed to upholding the cause of right, is dedicated to international legitimacy and believes in the justice of the Palestinian cause and the necessity of resolving it peacefully, has supported international efforts to convene a peace conference on the Middle East, and it continues to support the efforts being made to find a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement to this question and to the Middle East conflict as a whole.

Following the elapse of one whole year since the beginning of the peace process, it looks forward to the affirmation of the will of the international community and the intensification of its efforts to halt the Israeli policy aimed at obliterating Palestinian rights through settlement that aims at changing the demographic and social structure and the cultural and civilizational character of the occupied Arab territories and at imposing a fait accompli on them, thereby defying all international covenants.

As I salute, on this occasion, the struggle and steadfastness of the Palestinian people in defending its rights and confronting the occupation and the sympathy and support that it receives from the peace- and justice-loving peoples of the world, let me not omit to commend the practical wisdom and elevated feeling of responsibility that characterize the Palestinian leadership, particularly in the sphere of the peace process.

Tunisia renews its readiness to participate actively in facilitating all solutions approved by the Palestinians that will guarantee them the restoration of their legitimate rights. It hopes that the efforts of the international community to advance the peace process and strengthen this orientation will continue with firmness and resolve, with a view to the realization of the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people to exercise its right to self-determination and build its State in its territory, in accordance with international legitimacy and covenants.

I wish the international Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People every success in the continuation of its noble mission to assist the Palestinian people and participate in the establishment of peace and security in the Middle East region.

TURKEY

H.E. Mr. Süleyman Demirel, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I have the pleasure in reaffirming, on behalf of my Government and on my own behalf, our firm support for and solidarity with the Palestinian people in its just struggle for the achievement of its legitimate rights.

The Palestinian problem and the overall Arab-Israeli conflict, no doubt, constitute the main elements of the existing instability in the region. A just and lasting solution to these issues must be found if we want peace and security in the Middle East.

As we have expressed on previous occasions, such a solution can only be found through the withdrawal of Israel from the Arab territories she has occupied since 1967, the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, including their right to self-determination, and also through the acknowledgement of the right of all the parties in the region to live in peace and stability within secure and recognized borders.

A year has passed since the beginning of the Middle East Peace Conference which we evaluate as a historic opportunity for the establishment of the long-awaited peace, stability and security in the region. However, we are well aware that the peace process will be a difficult and long one, requiring patience and courage. It would be proper to seek the success of the Conference in the determination of the parties to discuss their problems at the bilateral level, despite all their divergences. Furthermore, the fact that the Arab States and Israel, confronting each other for decades, have come to the negotiating table within the peace process, constitutes a source of hope in itself.

We sincerely hope that the opportunity created by the Middle East Peace Conference should be evaluated properly by all who are concerned to work out a solution based on United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

On this occasion, I would like to emphasize that the Palestinian people, who have suffered for years, need at this critical juncture, more than ever, the solidarity and support of the international community. In this connection, I wish to commend the persistent efforts made by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to promote a wider awareness of the question of Palestine and thus contribute to the creation of a stronger sympathy and support among the world community for the legitimate cause of the Palestinian people.

I take this opportunity to reiterate the best wishes of the Turkish nation and the Turkish Government to the Palestinian people in its determined efforts for the realization of its legitimate aspirations within the framework of a just and lasting peace in the region.

UGANDA

H.E. Mr. Yoweri K. Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I wish on behalf of myself, the Government and the people of Uganda, to pay tribute to you and the members of your Committee for your immense contribution in maintaining the attention of the international community to the plight of the Palestinian people who have been denied the right to self-determination for more than four decades.

At the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict is the denial of a people of its right to nationhood due to Israel's occupation of its homeland even at a time when the international climate favours peace resolution of conflicts. The repression of Palestinians in the occupied territories, contrary to the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, continues. Repressive measures and excessive use of force are used against individual or collective Palestinians by Israeli state agents and settlers. A tragic result is the increasing number of children and other innocent persons who have become casualties in this repression. Settlements of Jewish immigrants continue in the occupied territories.

Uganda wishes to commend the courage of the people of Palestine who, in spite of all the repressive measures employed against them, have continued to seek for a peaceful resolution with Israel. The statesmanship displayed by the Palestinian leadership and especially by the Palestine Liberation Organization during the ongoing peace negotiations, despite many obstacles and frustrations, is commendable.

We also wish to commend all the parties involved in the peace negotiations. Though no definite positive changes have taken place for the Palestinians, the negotiations are a positive development. We call on the Labour Government now in Israel to confirm its commitment to peace by agreeing to negotiate for a long-lasting solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. That can only happen if Palestinians cease to be an occupied people.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates

[Original: Arabic]

On behalf of the United Arab Emirates and its people, I am pleased to address to you personally and to the members of your esteemed Committee thanks and appreciation for your strenuous and persistent efforts to aid the Palestinian people in its struggle to achieve its national aspirations. We should also like to express to you our appreciation and admiration for your perseverance in assuming and pursuing this responsibility despite the difficulties and obstacles which Israel has placed in the way of the implementation of your task.

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, we should also like to reiterate to you our solidarity with the Palestinian people and our support for that people in its just struggle for freedom and independence.

One of the results of your efforts to familiarize the world with the justice of the cause of the Palestinian people, which has suffered greatly from the oppression of the Israeli occupation and the humiliation of the displacement by Israel of its sons, has been to give new impetus to the international community in fulfilling its duty to launch a serious initiative for the settlement of that question. That initiative has resulted in the convening of the Madrid Peace Conference and the subsequent bilateral and multilateral negotiations.

For our part, we supported the convening of that Conference, and subsequently participated in the multilateral negotiations, which we hope will lead to a just, comprehensive and durable peace with respect to the problem of the Middle East, the crux of which is the Palestinian question. That should be founded on an Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and the recovery by the Palestinian people of its legitimate rights, including the right to self-determination.

We should also like to commend the political flexibility which has characterized the Palestinian position prior to the convening of the Conference, as well as during the Conference and the subsequent negotiations.

Until such time as a settlement is reached whereby the Palestinian people recovers its rights, we, the Government and people of the United Arab Emirates, shall maintain our support for the Palestinian people and its struggle, and shall continue to provide all the assistance it is in our power to provide. We are fully confident that the day will come, God willing, when the Palestinian people will return to its territory to exercise its rights and live freely as do the other peoples of the world.

VIET NAM

H.E. Mr. Vo Van Kiet, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, 29 November 1992, I would like to convey to you and through you to the Palestinian people the greetings of solidarity of the Vietnamese people. I would also like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our unflinching support for the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people to regain its sacred and legitimate national rights, including the right to self-determination, the right to return to its homeland, and the right to establish an independent and sovereign State. Viet Nam welcomes the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and is of the view that a just and comprehensive solution to the Middle East and Palestinian questions can only be achieved on the basis of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) of the United Nations Security Council and the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from all occupied Arab territories, the cessation of settlements therein and recognition of the fundamental national rights of the Palestinian people.

In this spirit, I would like to express our support for the good will and position of the Palestinian delegation to the current Middle East peace talks. We are convinced that the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, will certainly achieve its goals in the struggle for its sacred national rights.

YEMEN

H.E. Lieutenant-General Ali Abdullah Saleh, President of the Presidential Council of Yemen

[Original: Arabic]

I am pleased to transmit to you, on my own behalf and on behalf of the Yemeni leadership and people and through you to all peace- and justice-loving peoples, Governments, organizations and personages throughout the world, my most sincere sentiments and my hopes that your persistent struggle and your ongoing efforts to vindicate the just and legitimate rights of the Palestinian people may be crowned with success. We are gathered here today to observe solidarity with its just struggle for the restoration of its rights that have been usurped for more than half a century.

The basis of the struggle of the Palestinian people over the past 44 years are firmly rooted in the essence of international legitimacy, as formulated in the Charter and other authoritative documents of the United Nations, which affirm the legitimacy of its struggle to attain its right to self-determination, to establish its independent State on Palestinian soil and to choose of its own full volition its political regime and its leadership.

The question of Palestine has been and still is one of the most important issues that has engaged the international community throughout the life of the international Organization and one to which the international community has accorded special importance as being the core of the conflict under way in the Middle East.

However, as all are aware, many of the attempts and endeavours aimed at resolving it have failed because of Israel's obduracy and persistence in usurping the Palestinian territories and its occupation of the other Arab territories by military force, heedless of the resolutions and appeals of the international community.

This issue constitutes today — as it always has — a severe test for the international community and its credibility in the treatment of international issues under the new international order, which calls for the establishment of set criteria for dealing with issues of tension in our contemporary world and finding just solutions to the many regional disputes, without double standards or distinctions.

The Palestinian people, which for four and a half decades has been — as it still is — subjected to many forms of international oppression and collective slaughter, is still exposed daily to repeated human rights violations that are affirmed clearly and unambiguously by the reports of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories submitted to the United Nations General Assembly at its forty-sixth and forty-seventh sessions.

The Republic of Yemen gave its blessings and support to the peace initiatives commenced at Madrid in 1991, in the hope that they would lead to the establishment of a just and lasting peace based on the international resolutions rejected consistently by Israel in blatant defiance of international legitimacy. Those peace initiatives gave rise to considerable optimism among the peoples of the region, particularly with the important succession of meetings on peace negotiations between Arabs and Israel in the United States capital. However, those hopes were dissipated as a result of Israeli procrastination and arrogance, which cast doubts on the credibility of the Zionist State and its desire for peace, inasmuch as that State's practices of destruction and demolition and its continued occupation of Arab territories are totally at variance with a serious desire for peace.

This disparity between the multilateral peace process and the actual situation with regard to Israeli practices reveals dangerous indicators that do not serve international peace and security, particularly given the repeated military attacks on Lebanon, the continuation of acts of slaughter and bombing there and the notable expansion of the construction of settlements and the settlement of Jewish migrants in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan, the expulsion of the population, the destruction of homes, arbitrary arrests, the torture of prisoners, terrorist acts against minors, the breaking of children's bones, the raid on the sacred Dome of the Rock and other inhumane practices contrary to human rights, the fourth Geneva Convention and all international laws, covenants and treaties. All this clearly shows that Israel is forging ahead to realize its old dreams, as recalled clearly by the former Prime Minister of Israel in his famous statement at the opening of the Madrid Peace Conference, within sight and earshot of the leaders and peoples of the world.

Yemen was one of the first to give its blessings to and support all international peace efforts, particularly the United States initiative that, unquestionably, opened horizons of optimism that called for greater efforts and follow-up, as well as highlighting the importance of solidarity among the various international forces, in particular the great Powers, with a view to applying pressure by all means and at all political, economic and military levels to deflect Israel from its manoeuvres vis-à-vis the peace process and to make it comply with the objective facts and all the developments witnessed by the world recently, in a spirit of peaceful conciliation, avoiding the dilatoriness and procrastination prevailing at present, in the light of an examination of the results of the seven rounds of bilateral negotiations in Washington, particularly since the international community has the opportunity, today more than at any time in the past, for establishing peace in the Middle East, by insisting on the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy, in order to safeguard the credibility of the new international trend towards the dissemination of a spirit of conciliation, cooperation and noble competition based on according others — equal opportunities to demonstrate the finest values and cultural behaviours conducive to the welfare of the human community whose basis is the free human being of free will. True peace cannot pass through the gate of incapacitating Israeli conditions. It will rather be the product of a serious and persevering action through the efforts of the international community, within the framework of the United Nations and in accordance with international resolutions, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Let me not omit to commend the brave and responsible initiatives shown by the militant Palestinian people, represented by its legitimate leadership, the Palestine Liberation Organization and its National Council, demonstrating a desire for peace and coexistence with its neighbours, particularly in the case of the initiative taken by the Palestine National Council at its session held at Algiers in 1988 and the steps and proposals for peace that followed it. That left Israeli allegations and pretexts no credibility. This, at a time when the masses in the occupied territory are showing rare patience and steadfastness in resisting the Zionist schemes aimed at distorting its just and militant form and obliterating its national identity, after first extinguishing the brand of its proud will for liberation and freedom.

Lastly, allow me to commend once again your intrepid solidarity with the struggle of our Palestinian Arab people in itself and in its interaction with the various just international causes. This solidarity represents the vigilance of the human conscience.

I wish you every success.

B. Message from Ministers for Foreign Affairs

ECUADOR

H.E. Mr. Diego Paredes, Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Spanish]

On the occasion of the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I wish to reaffirm the unwavering support of the Government and people of Ecuador for the rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people.

In keeping with the principles that guide its foreign policy, my Government supports a peaceful, comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

The Government of Ecuador hopes that the parties to the conflict will cooperate in a sincere manner in order to overcome all obstacles that could jeopardize the efforts being made by the community of nations to achieve the primary objective, in fulfilment of its obligation to maintain international peace and security and to ensure respect for the civil and political rights of peoples.

The Government of Ecuador also expresses its satisfaction at the step forward which the peace process begun at Madrid in October 1991 represents, and reiterates its hope that, with the active cooperation of all the parties concerned, this process will soon be brought to a successful conclusion.

GREECE

H.E. Mr. Michael G. Papaconstantinou, Minister for Foreign Affairs

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, Greece pays tribute to the statesmanship and moderation displayed by the leadership of the Palestinian people which have allowed them to assume a constructive and pragmatic role at the Middle East Peace Conference.

The current Peace Conference is bound to produce a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Middle East problem, the core of which is the Palestinian issue. History is full of missed opportunities. Let us pave the way for a mutual understanding which is indispensable for the success of the peace efforts.

We based our hopes on the fact that all parties involved in the conflict have expressed their will to sit around the same table in order to negotiate. This encouraging fact shows that all peoples in the region want to ensure that they can live in peace and security within internationally-recognized boundaries, while recognizing the right of the Palestinians for self-determination.

HUNGARY

H.E. Mr. Géza Jeszenszky, Minister for Foreign Affairs

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, may I, on behalf of the Hungarian people and of my own, express my heartfelt best wishes.

Having followed with attention the negotiating process aimed at achieving a settlement for the Middle East, we have come to note with satisfaction that the parties concerned are now engaged in discussions of substance. In a spirit of mutual goodwill as well as readiness for compromises, it is also becoming possible to establish soon the framework of a satisfactory solution to the Palestine question.

We are of the view that a unique historic opportunity is now at hand to solve the Palestine question which constitutes a fundamental element of the Middle East settlement. This gives us reason to be confident that stability will prevail in the region as a result of the peace process based on United Nations resolutions, which we have also supported, and on the principles of the peace negotiations, as laid down at the Madrid Conference. We also trust in this regard that the rights of the Palestinian people will finally be also realized. The constructive participation of its plenipotentiaries in the ongoing negotiations, which constitute part of the peace process, is a sure guarantee of the attainment of that goal.

It is our sincere hope that, as a result of the efforts to bring peace and security to the Middle East and to ensure cooperation among the nations of the region, the Palestinian people will, with international support, soon be able, under peaceful circumstances, to take its fate into its own hands.

JAPAN

H.E. Mr. Michio Watanabe, Minister for Foreign Affairs

On the fifteenth International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I wish to extend the cordial greetings of the Government of Japan.

The ongoing peace process should be regarded as a precious opportunity to achieve peace in the Middle East. I urge all parties concerned to demonstrate as flexible and practical an attitude as possible and thus to make the most of this opportunity.

Japan, for its part, has been making every effort to create an atmosphere conducive to the achievement of peace in the Middle East. An essential part of that effort is assistance to the people of Palestine who are suffering the hardships of occupation and displacement. Japan has been extending such assistance through the activities of various international organizations, including the United Nations Relief

and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the United Nations Development Programme. Specifically, Japan is cooperating with UNRWA in various ways, for example, by providing vocational training and scholarships to Palestinian refugees. It is increasing such assistance with a view to preparing for the establishment of a provisional self-government of Palestine, in the near future, as envisaged in the current peace talks.

Intending to make a more substantial contribution to the settlement of the Middle East problem, Japan took part in the preparatory meeting for multilateral Middle East talks that was convened in Moscow. In fact, Japan has participated in the activities of all five working groups and steering committees created by those Moscow talks in the belief that they will facilitate and complement direct talks among the parties concerned. Japan is particularly active in the working group for the environment, of which it serves as a co-organizer. As part of its efforts in the former group, Japan sent a fact-finding mission to the occupied territory in March prior to convening a meeting in May in Tokyo. The purpose of these efforts was to assess the situation and identify actual needs in the occupied territory through direct dialogue with its inhabitants with the ultimate aim of effecting climatic improvements.

It is my earnest hope that, as the peace process advances the cause of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, it will also contribute to improving the lives of the people of Palestine. Japan will be unstinting in its support of efforts to achieve that goal.

LEBANON

H.E. Mr. Fares Bouez, Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Arabic]

As we commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I should like to reaffirm — on behalf of myself and of the people and Government of Lebanon — our absolute and continuing solidarity with the fraternal Palestinian people as it strives to achieve its national objectives of self-determination in its territory

International and regional developments inspire us with the hope that international legitimacy and the principles of human rights will be allowed to demonstrate their primacy in the solution of chronic problems. First and foremost among such problems is the question of Palestine, which undoubtedly constitutes the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Palestinians are still being subjected, as they were in the past, to a denial of their fundamental human rights. The Israeli occupation has vainly sought to eliminate them as an issue by creating a new de facto situation on the ground, by denying their existence as a people and by using violence and terrorism to crush their national aspirations. The Palestinians' continuing intifadah in the occupied territories simply confirms that the people's ardour will not be extinguished and that no settlement of the Middle East issue can ignore the fact of the Palestinian presence as a part of the region's future, as it has been throughout history.

Lebanon, believing as it does in a just, comprehensive and lasting peace, trusts that the Palestinian people will, if allowed to exercise its legitimate rights, play a creative and active role in developing the region and converting it into an oasis of peace and prosperity. In this connection, we hope that the ongoing peace process will break out of the current impasse in a manner commensurate with the interests of all the parties involved.

More than a year has passed since the beginning of the Arab-Israeli talks on ending the bitter conflict in our region without this positive development yet having produced any concrete results. The Palestinian people, like the Lebanese people and other peoples of the region, is still enduring the various features which have marked Israeli regional policy since the outset, namely, a cruel occupation, violent terrorism and deliberate disregard for the Charter of the United Nations and international conventions.

We hereby convey our appreciation and admiration to the members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in particular, and to all those working for the victory of the Palestinian people. We hope that the aims, shared by both them and us, of establishing a just and lasting peace in the Middle East region will be fulfilled, based on the recognition and exercise of the legitimate rights of peoples, including the Palestinian people.

LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA

H.E. Mr. Omar Mustafa al-Muntasir, Secretary of the General People's Committee of the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation

[Original: Arabic]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which is commemorated by the peoples, international and regional agencies of the United Nations in recognition and appreciation of the just struggle being waged by the Palestinian Arab people to liberate its territory, achieve self-determination, establish its own independent State and take its rightful place alongside the peoples of the world, it behoves me to greet you and to commend the efforts undertaken by the United Nations since its establishment to strengthen international peace and security and to promote the causes of liberation and justice in the world.

The question of Palestine has been a source of major international concern within the United Nations ever since the Organization was founded. No other issue has so clearly confronted the United Nations with its responsibilities and commitment to declared objectives. Despite the adoption of numerous resolutions affirming the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homes, the Organization has not yet been able to take any decisive practical measures which would enable the Palestinian people to exercise its legitimate rights and to establish its own independent State. The reasons for this inability lie in an irresponsible use of the veto and the application of dual standards in implementing United Nations resolutions on certain international issues, whereby resolutions are applied to some States but ignored in the case of others. In addition, the political, military and economic support provided by certain Member States to the Zionist entity causes that entity to persist in its obstinacy and its disparagement of all international resolutions.

The international community is called upon today, now more than ever in the past, particularly in the light of international détente, to support the Palestinian Arab people, to promote its just struggle and to endorse the declaration of its independent State in order thus to assert its right to and sovereignty over its land. The community must also urge the Zionist entity to curtail its obduracy and disregard for the Charter and pertinent resolutions of the United Nations and to halt its policy of killing, expulsion, terrorism and settlement at others' expense.

The great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya affirms its adherence to all the resolutions that guarantee the full rights of the Palestinian people and urges you and the international community as represented in the United Nations to work by all possible means to render justice to this people, free it from oppression and enable it to recover its usurped rights and land.

We are convinced that the will of peoples cannot be defeated and that those peoples which fight for their freedom and dignity will surely be victorious.

MAURITANIA

[Original: French]

H.E. Mohamed Abderahmane Ould Moine, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is being celebrated this year against the background of the Peace Conference on the Middle East, which has continued to arouse hopes for peace since it was launched in Madrid in autumn 1991. The Islamic Republic of Mauritania, which has been unstinting in its efforts to find a just and lasting solution to this persistent problem, welcomed that initiative at the time and called for rapid progress to be made in the negotiations to secure the long-awaited peace settlement, for which the solution of the question of Palestine remains the Gordian knot. Today, after all the efforts made and despite the slow progress achieved, our hope is still to see the Palestinian people finally regain their inalienable rights and for peace to return to the Middle East. We therefore wish to take this opportunity to launch a vigorous appeal to the good will of all parties concerned for still greater efforts to be devoted to achieving this goal.

The Palestinian people, which has now endured more than 40 years of suffering, is entitled, like all peoples, to peace and justice. We hope that this Day will be marked by a renewed commitment to the triumph of the just cause of the Palestinian people and we reaffirm our determination to support that people until such time as it achieves its legitimate aspirations under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, its sole legitimate representative.

OMAN

H.E. Mr. Youssef Bin Al-Alawi Bin Abdullah, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Arabic]

Believing as it does that the question of Palestine is at the core of the conflict in the Middle East, Oman this year once again joins the international community in observing the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and in striving, together with the people of the region and with all who cherish peace, for a just political solution to the Palestine issue that will guarantee the legitimate human rights of the fraternal Palestinian people and secure peace, security and stability for all parties in the region.

We and the international community must here express concern at the fact that Israel is pursuing its settlement policy and relentlessly imposing repressive measures on the defenceless Palestinian population, an unjust policy that has the basic goal of expelling it and replacing it with Jewish immigrants, and is thereby violating the Geneva Conventions in its capacity as an occupying Power.

Israel must understand that a genuine guarantee of security can only come about by promoting peace through the adoption of a fair solution that takes account of the legitimate rights of all the parties concerned on an equal footing and that is based on international legitimacy and the resolutions of the United Nations, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Accordingly, and as part of the efforts being made by Oman to direct the attention of the international community to the suffering of the Palestinian people under occupation, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, in his historic address on the occasion of the Sultanate's 22nd National Day on 18 November 1992, called for urgent and rapid action to mitigate the daily suffering of the Palestinian people languishing under the yoke of occupation. He also called for greater support and backing for the efforts being made to arrive at a peaceful, durable and just solution that will restore legitimate rights to those to whom they are due and guarantee security, peace and stability.

In its belief in the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations, Oman feels optimistic at the efforts being made by the United States of America and the Russian Federation to resolve the longstanding issue of the Middle East. With the convening of the Madrid Conference in 1991, those efforts are represented in the fact that all parties in the region are sitting down at the negotiating table. Oman is hopeful that all parties will overcome the traditional obstacles and will find the political will to help impart impetus to the peace efforts and that the bilateral and multilateral negotiations, in which Oman has participated, will yield positive results that are satisfactory to all parties.

Oman calls upon the international community to make a greater effort than ever before to reach a peaceful, comprehensive and just solution to this issue, which will have a great impact on international peace and security.

In conclusion, I convey to you and to the other members of the Committee on behalf of the Sultanate our great appreciation for the dedicated efforts that you are making to advance and promote the issue of Palestine, and we assure you that Oman shall spare no effort to support the work of the Committee.

With my sincere wishes for your success.

PANAMA

H.E. Mr. Julio E. Linares, Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Spanish]

On behalf of the Government and people of Panama, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sends fraternal greetings to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on the occasion of the observance, on 30 November 1992, of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

The Government of Panama recognizes the Palestinian people's hard fight to achieve self-determination and respect for its inalienable rights, and trusts that that people's desire for justice and freedom will be fulfilled in the near future, in the interests of international peace and security.

The Government of Panama has followed with great interest the efforts being made within the framework of the peace talks between the parties involved in the situation in the Middle East, and continues to hope that a peaceful solution can be reached and that agreements can be worked out for the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, which would enable the Palestinian people to exercise its rights in accordance with the general principles of international law and United Nations resolutions, and would also recognize the right of all States in the region to exist within secure and internationally recognized boundaries.

Our country urges the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to continue to do its utmost to promote international efforts to ensure the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, which have been recognized and reaffirmed by the General Assembly.

PHILIPPINES

H.E. Mr. Roberto R. Romulo, Secretary of Foreign Affairs

On behalf of the Philippine Government and the Filipino people, I join the United Nations and the international community on this year's observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

The Philippines regards the current Middle East peace process, begun in Madrid in October 1991, as the most welcome opportunity ever to find a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine. It is our hope that all the parties concerned would persevere in the arduous bilateral and multilateral negotiation process and that these talks could soon end the sad plight of the Palestinian people and the state of hostilities in that tortured region.

My Government congratulates the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its unstinting efforts in advancing the Palestinian cause and in enhancing the international awareness of their unjust plight.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

H.E. Mr. Lee Sang-Ock, Minister of Foreign Affairs

On behalf of the people and the Government of the Republic of Korea, I would like to pay tribute to the Palestinian people on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, for its courageous and heroic efforts to achieve its national independence and self-government.

The Government of the Republic of Korea joins the international community in its unequivocal support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and expresses earnest hope for peace in the Middle East.

Convinced that resolving the question of Palestine is a key element in achieving peace in that region, I would like to reiterate the position of my Government that the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, recognized in the relevant United Nations resolutions, including the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State, should be fully respected.

In recent years, we have witnessed dramatic changes on the global scene. These developments will promote the cause of peace in many regions of the world, including the Middle East. In this regard, it is hope that the peace process, begun in Madrid in October 1991, will, with the support and encouragement of the world community, recapture its momentum and make substantial progress toward a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East situation.

Finally, on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Korea, I should like to take this opportunity to pay my deep respect to the Chairman and members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for their valuable efforts toward bringing about a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine.

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

H.E. Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Minister of Foreign Affairs

As we observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I should like, on behalf of the Government and people of Namibia and indeed, on my own behalf, to renew our fraternal solidarity with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and to reaffirm our unswerving support for the Palestinian people in its heroic struggle for the restoration of its inalienable rights to self-determination.

Namibia, having recently emerged from a colonial oppression, is naturally committed to supporting the Palestinian people and the leadership of the PLO, who are resolutely pursuing their struggle for liberation leading to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State.

We are commemorating this momentous anniversary with sorrow because the Palestinian people have been left totally dispossessed of its homeland. At the same time, commemoration reaffirms the international community's solidarity with the Palestinian people and the rejection of Israel's continued occupation of Palestine and other Arab lands, which is contrary to all norms of international law and a gross violation of fundamental human rights of the Palestinian people.

The momentum engendered by the ongoing Middle East peace talks should not be allowed to ebb. The Namibian Government therefore urges all the parties to negotiate in good faith and make genuine efforts to ensure that the negotiations are not derailed. In this regard, it is our hope that the Palestinian problem could be solved through full and effective implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions. In this context, the final lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East problem must also ensure the recognition of the existence and sovereignty of Israel and respect to her legitimate and secure borders.

The Republic of Namibia has established diplomatic relations with the State of Palestine on 2 May 1991 to solidify relations between the two nations. For us, therefore, the commemoration is not only a necessary political gesture but also an expression of our nation's commitment against all forms of violence, injustice, foreign domination and violation of human rights.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm Namibia's commitment and support for this important Committee for its remarkable efforts aimed at informing and sensitizing international public opinion about the situation of the Palestinian people and its legitimate aspirations for liberation and nationhood.

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

H.E. Mr. Farouk Al-Sharaa, Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Arabic]

On behalf of the Syrian Arab Republic and on my own personal behalf, I salute your observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and its legitimate struggle for the restoration of its inalienable national rights, in implementation of General Assembly resolution 45/67 of 6 December 1990. It gives me pleasure on this occasion to hail the Palestinian intifadah, which is rejuvenated year after year, steadfast in its determined struggle to resist the Israeli occupation and its repressive practices.

The Charter of the United Nations and the relevant international instruments have rejected aggression and the occupation of the territory of others by force, they have condemned the inhuman, repressive and arbitrary practices of the occupation forces, and they have upheld the rights of peoples and States to resist occupation, to defend themselves and to exercise self-determination. Accordingly, the Palestinian people has no alternative but to resist, to reject the occupation and to call upon the international community to implement the United Nations resolutions calling upon Israel to withdraw from the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories and acknowledge the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people.

The Syrian Arab Republic, its Palestinian brothers and the other Arab countries participating in the Madrid Peace Conference have placed tangible evidence before the entire world that they are dedicated to a comprehensive and just peace based on international legitimacy, on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and on the land-for-peace formula. At the same time, Israel has, from the outset, endeavoured to raise obstacles to and place prior conditions on its participation in the peace process. During the peace talks, it has persisted in its refusal to embark on the implementation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) on all fronts and in its attempt to distort this resolution, which requires Israel's withdrawal from all the Arab territories that it occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem and the Golan.

Syria, whose history has been linked with ceaseless defence of the cause of Palestine and support for the rights of the Palestinian people, remains determined to continue the battle for a just and comprehensive peace that will ensure Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories and will enable the Palestinian people to exercise its imprescriptible national rights, first and foremost its right to self-determination and to establish an independent State on its national soil.

In commending the efforts of your Committee to support and assist the struggle of the Palestinian people, I look forward with you to the day when a comprehensive, just and lasting peace will prevail in the region and secure for its peoples security, stability and development and spare them the woes of war and destruction.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

H.E. Mr. Ralph Maraj, Minister of Foreign Affairs

In accordance with the 1977 decision of the General Assembly, the international community observes each November the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago joins the rest of the global family in this observance.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has been steadfast in its support for the Palestinian people and in its call for the right of self-determination without external interference to be extended to the long-suffering people of Palestine. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago remains convinced that peace and stability will be achieved in the Middle East only when the Palestinian people enjoy and exercise its inalienable right to its own homeland and to build its future in peace, dignity and freedom.

Recent events in the Middle East, particularly the ongoing discussions under the Madrid process, provide some room for cautious optimism. It is our hope that this process will eventually lead to a just and comprehensive resolution of this long-standing issue.

On this occasion the Government of Trinidad and Tobago wishes to reaffirm its solidarity with and support for the Palestinian people in its struggle to recover and enjoy its inalienable right to its own homeland and further looks forward to an early, just and permanent solution to the problems in the region.

UKRAINE

H.E. Mr. Anatoliy M. Zlenko, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Fifteen years ago, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution on the annual observance of the 29th of November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The measures taken with this respect reflect the international conviction that peace in the Middle East must be based on justice in relation to the Palestinian people, who have been in the state of a banished nation for more than four decades.

The Day of Solidarity symbolizes great significance which the world community attaches to the question of Palestine, the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the necessity to attain comprehensive and lasting settlement in the Middle East.

The present Day of Solidarity is being marked under a period of profound transformations in the world, creating the prerequisites for the settlement of the remaining regional conflicts, for the exercise by all the peoples, including the Palestinians, of their inalienable right to self-determination. Under these circumstances, we consider the peaceful settlement in the Middle East one of the most important tasks facing the world community. Ukraine is proceeding from the fact that the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the question of Palestine being the core of it, is the basis for the peaceful solution of the Middle East problem. We are convinced that its just solution is possible only under conditions when all States in the region recognize the legal rights of the Palestinian people, as well as the responsibility for their realization. Ukraine has always proceeded from these fundamental considerations in her activities as a member of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, striving to contribute to the cause of the mobilization of world efforts in favour of the quick settlement of the question of Palestine.

Ukraine pins big hopes on the successful development of the process of negotiations stated within the framework of the Madrid Peace Conference on the Middle East.

The results of the rounds already completed testify in general to the fact that their participants understand their high responsibility before the whole world. Though the negotiations are progressing with great difficulties, we hope that political wisdom, self-control and realism of all the conflicting parties will allow at last to reach specific agreements aimed at the achievement of peace and stability in this geopolitically important region.

Ukraine, having chosen the path of independent and democratic development, shall further strive to do everything possible to increase its contribution to the cause of fair settlement in the Middle East.

I am confident that under your skillful leadership, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People shall continue its noble activity, the final goal of which is the achievement of justice and peace.

C. Messages from intergovernmental organizations with observer status at the United Nations

ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE

H.E. Dr. Hamid Algabid, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference

[Original: French]

On the occasion of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I take pleasure in expressing the gratitude and appreciation of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to the United Nations and its various agencies, and in particular the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which you so perceptively chair, for the very noble and important role you play in fostering the just cause of the Palestinian people, which is its struggle for self-determination, freedom and independence. General Assembly resolution 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, designating 29 November of each year as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, is clear proof of that. The resolution reflects the international community's already apparent understanding of the just and legitimate struggle being waged by the Palestinian people under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), its sole legitimate representative, for the recovery of its inalienable rights, in accordance with international law and the resolutions deriving therefrom.

OIC has welcomed the beginning of the peace process in the Middle East. It has reaffirmed this position in many resolutions, including those adopted at the sixth Islamic summit conference, and has expressed its pleasure that the peace process should be based on resolutions under international law and on the land-for-peace formula, which, together with the total Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Palestinian and Arab lands, including Al-Quds al-Sharif, will enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable national rights.

Even though the peace process is continuing, the Palestinian people still faces daunting challenges and is experiencing daily hardships and afflictions under the Israeli occupation. Within the occupied Palestinian territories, the Palestinian people is struggling daily against systematic repression, terrorism and killings of every kind. It is steadfastly resisting the continual attacks on Islamic and Christian places of worship, the seizure of lands and water resources and the ongoing settlement of Jewish colonies. All these practices form part of an Israeli plan intended to extort from the Palestinian people the greatest possible number of concessions, to the detriment of its legitimate national rights.

In this context, we ask the United Nations to assume its responsibilities and to increase its efforts to put an end to these inhuman practices, which run counter to the spirit of the peace process now under way and violate the principle of human rights. The United Nations should also provide the necessary protection to the Palestinian people until it is in a position to exercise its right to self-determination and to dwell in its own land with dignity and honour.

This meeting comes at a critical time for the Palestinian cause and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The peace process, with its bilateral and multilateral negotiations, has reached an important and crucial phase. Unfortunately, one year after it began, it has not made any tangible progress towards a just and comprehensive solution to the Middle Eastern crisis.

The peace process has now reached a phase where the international community must intensify its efforts to confront the dangers that threaten the negotiations on account of Israel's manoeuvres and constant delaying tactics aimed at avoiding the question of Al-Quds al-Sharif while advancing interpretations of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) that are at variance with those accepted by the international community. We must insist on the need to implement all resolutions under international law, including Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as the land-for-peace formula, which will guarantee total Israeli withdrawal from the

occupied Palestinian and Arab lands, including Al-Quds al-Sharif, the recognition of the political rights of the Palestinian people and the settlement of the problem of Palestinian refugees, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and Security Council resolution 237 (1967).

OIC reaffirms, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, its pride in and support for the blessed intifadah of the Palestinian people, which it is waging under the leadership of the PLO, its sole legitimate representative, in order to win back its inalienable national rights, including its right to self-determination and its right to build an independent State on Palestinian soil, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital.

Again, we take this opportunity to express our respect and gratitude to various States for the positions they have taken in support of the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian people's struggle. We exhort them to continue to lend all possible support to the Palestinian people.

Once again, I heartily thank the United Nations and its specialized committees, and particularly the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, for the constructive role they have always played in promoting Palestinian rights.

D. Messages from national liberation organizations

PAN AFRICANIST CONGRESS OF AZANIA

Dr. S.E.M. Pheko, Chief Representative to the United Nations

The Pan Africanist Congress of Azania salutes the struggle of the Palestinian people for self-determination and its fallen martyrs. These heroes and heroines are not fallen in vain.

The Palestine struggle has many similarities with that of Azania, colonially called "South Africa" since 20 September 1909.

In fact, the Balfour Declaration of 1917 is the equivalent of the South Africa Act 1909 which consolidated colonialism, racism and apartheid instead of colonizing this African country.

Long live the struggle of Palestine!

Long live the struggle of Azania!

E. Messages from United Nations specialized agencies

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

Mr. Federico Mayor, Director-General

[Original: French]

Despite the difficulties encountered, the declared willingness of all participants to bring the peace process in the Middle East to a conclusion raises great hope throughout the world. The United Nations system shares in this hope as it celebrates the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People this year.

Now, on the eve of the third millennium, after decades of tragic upheavals, the peoples of the region and the Palestinian people in particular, aspire to bequeath to future generations a legacy of peace and cooperation marked by respect for the rights of all. Never before have all the parties been so unanimous in recognizing that without a satisfactory solution of the Palestine question, peace will remain an unattainable dream.

Until that longed-for solution is found, UNESCO pledges to use every means at its disposal in its areas of competence within the United Nations family to ensure that the Palestinian people continues to enjoy the solidarity of the international community.

F. Messages from non-governmental organizations

AFRICA ALLIANCE OF YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS

We acknowledge with gratitude receipt of your circular letter of 1 November on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People to be observed on 29 November 1992.

We, the Africa Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations, representing YMCA movements in 24 African countries, would like to once more express our firm solidarity with the Palestinian people on this particular day. We continuously hope and pray that all those who believe in justice and human equality shall continue to struggle until a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question is arrived at.

CENTRAL LATINOAMERICANA DE TRABAJADORES

[Original: Spanish]

We wish hereby to endorse the observance, on 29 November 1992, of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

Unfortunately, the events which took place in the Republic of Venezuela, where our organization has its headquarters, prevented us from sending a message of endorsement and solidarity, in keeping with our unswerving commitment to the fight by the Palestinian workers and people to defend their legitimate and inalienable rights.

Please accept and convey to all those who, in one way or another, fight alongside the Palestinian workers and people, not only our most fraternal greetings, but also our reaffirmed endorsement of and solidarity with so just a claim and a right.

Furthermore, we would like to have at our disposal the documentation and materials mentioned in your note, in order to report to our affiliated organizations, which represent more than 20 million workers in the Latin American region.

COUNCIL FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF ARAB-BRITISH UNDERSTANDING

The Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding would like to take the opportunity, on this solemn and auspicious occasion, to express our wholehearted solidarity with the Palestinian people.

It is of the utmost importance, even once a year, to formally mark the unjust suffering which has been endured by the Palestinians and continues to be endured despite the peace conference, which is still limping along, although halfheartedly, and despite almost unanimous support from the international community.

Until the Palestinians receive the legitimate rights to which they are entitled, there will be no peace in the Middle East.

EUROPEAN COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NGOs ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

I acknowledge, with thanks, receipt of your very kind invitation extended to the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ECCP), on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

I wish to express my deep regrets for not being able to respond positively to that invitation but would like to take this opportunity to convey to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People my sincere wishes for an interesting and successful meeting.

On this occasion, allow me to reaffirm ECCP's commitment to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East and to support the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, right of return and the right to a Palestinian State.

Equally, I wish to express our grave concern at the deteriorating condition of the Palestinian population living under Israeli occupation and this, despite the fact that the peace process has achieved a point of no return.

The passage of time has simply emphasized how vital it is that meaningful progress should be made in line with the principles outlined years ago by United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

My committee must therefore urge the United Nations the strongest possible action against Israel to enforce its full cooperation in this respect.

GENERAL UNION OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN

The General Union of Palestinian Women sends its greeting to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and to all those people and organizations who have stood by the Palestinian people in its legitimate and just struggle towards liberation and the achievement of its national and inalienable rights.

For almost half a century, the United Nations, and in particular the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, have taken one resolution after another confirming, asserting and reiterating the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, return and the establishment of an independent sovereign State on Palestinian national soil.

Palestinian women are extremely dismayed that within that long stretch of time, not one of these resolutions has been implemented. In the meantime facts are being established on the ground and the Palestinian people everywhere, especially in occupied Palestine, are being subjected to endless violations of their human rights, which include outright murder and execution, eviction of families from their lands and property, the demolishing of homes, the destruction of crops, detention without due process, torture in prison, leading sometimes to death, the closure of institutions of learning and culture, the shutting down of humanitarian organizations, and the unlimited restrictions and harassment which spare no one and which render life virtually intolerable.

We are gravely concerned that the United Nations, despite all these terrible realities which are fully documented in its annals, is taking no action to put an end to this untenable situation and is indeed accepting to be coerced into dealing with global issues with double standards, thus violating the basic principles of equality and justice upon which it was established. To aggravate matters, the false sense of security which the United Nations is inspiring is creating an atmosphere of complacency which only helps to perpetrate the status quo of domination and injustice, especially regarding the question of Palestine. Our voices, clamoring for an end to the suffering of our people and for the implementation of our human and national rights, are drowned, if not silenced, by this mood of complacency, and the catastrophic saga of our people continues while Israel continues to be generously rewarded and to bask in the glory of its conquest and aggression.

We therefore urge the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to assume the role of "the conscience" of the international community, spurring it to act without delay for the benefit of the world at large and our people in particular. This can best be implemented by:

1. Assuming full responsibility for the Palestinian problem and bringing it back to the fold of the United Nations. This implies the implementation of all United Nations resolutions pertaining to the Palestinian problem, and to the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole, foremost amongst which are:

   a. complete Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories;

   b. the establishment of an independent and sovereign State on Palestinian national soil and the rejection of all forms of autonomy as a substitute for total independence and sovereignty;

2. The principle of self-determination for the Palestinians is a prerequisite to any solution. Thus all contacts and steps taken must be with the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people everywhere.

3. In the interim, international protection has to be provided for the defenseless Palestinian people under Israeli occupation.

4. Taking all the necessary measures, including sanctions, to ensure that signatories to international conventions abide by international law and resolutions.

The alternative is certain to threaten our region and the world at large with disaster and endless conflicts. Peace cannot be imposed by aggression. It has to be based on equality and the recognition of the rights of others. And until the Palestinians regain their independence and sovereignty on their land and are fully recognized as a people with national rights, we may never hope for peace in our part of the world.

INDO-ARAB ISLAMIC YOUTH ASSOCIATION

While thanking you for your kind letter of 1 November 1992 regarding the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, we convey the warm greetings of the members of our Association and people of India to Your Excellency, members of the International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ICCP) and the Division for Palestinian Rights.

Indian people have been supporting the liberation struggle of Palestine, led by the Palestine Liberation Organization since inception. The freedom struggle of Palestinians is one of the longest one in their fight for freedom. The Palestinian people are struggling for the restoration of its legitimate and inalienable right to self-determination in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), based on the historic General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947. This resolution is yet to be implemented faithfully. The United Nations and the international community owe the responsibility of implementing such relevant resolutions to end the illegal occupation of Israel on Palestinian land, including the Golan Heights, West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The international community was optimistic on the United States-sponsored negotiations which began at Madrid last year. The Palestinians are getting disillusioned since no tangible result could come out despite completing eight rounds of such negotiations. It is unfortunate that the new Israeli Government has not kept its promise to stop the settlements in the occupied areas and the repression is still going on in the occupied areas. According to the report of the International Committee of the Red Cross, there are 16,000 Palestinians in Israeli jails and detention camps in utter violation of the Geneva Convention. There is need to free these prisoners besides restoring the right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property.

While expressing the solidarity and support of the Indian people for the liberation struggle of Palestine and the historic intifadah, we sincerely appreciate the commendable efforts of ICCP and the Division for Palestinian Rights, which are championing the cause of Palestine in a dedicated manner and thereby enhancing the respect and usefulness of the United Nations among the community of nations.

We wish your endeavours through success.

Long live the United Nations!

Long live Palestine!

INTERNATIONAL PROGRESS ORGANIZATION

The International Progress Organization, an NGO with headquarters in Vienna, Austria, wishes to reiterate its commitment in support of Palestinian rights and to an independent State in the West Bank and Gaza.

- We note that since the intifadah or popular uprising that began in December 1987, almost 2,000 Palestinians have been killed at the hands of Israeli soldiers and settlers, and
- That over 120,000 Palestinians have been detained and imprisoned and of these, some 18,000 are still in Israeli jails and detention centers;
- That over 10,000 Palestinians have been injured;
- That over 7,000 Palestinians have been permanently handicapped and/or disabled; and

- That these deaths, injuries, imprisonments and other actions are in violation of international law and the human rights of the Palestinians, as well as generally accepted fundamental moral values.

We find it difficult to accept the rejectionist philosophy of the past and present Israeli Administrations, who want both the land of the Palestinians and their hands in peace. United Nations resolutions, based on principles of equity, calls on the Israelis to give up "land for peace" on the model of the Israeli-Egyptian peace accords. In order to build and establish a true, just and lasting peace, United Nations resolutions must be implemented in full, both in their letter and spirit.

Among the most basic rights of the Palestinian people is to determine its own future, including a State of its own on the West Bank. Nor is it right or proper for Israel to attempt to thwart the will of the Palestinian people to achieve its goals of freedom and independence. These rights, which have been denied for too long, must be fully achieved if the peace which must come is to be fair, just and of a lasting nature.

The world Powers who, because of their military strength and political power, play a more significant role in maintaining international peace and security, must also weigh their actions carefully to help achieve a true, just and lasting peace in the region, and play a key supportive role in the peace negotiations.

Palestine was wrongfully divided by the United Nations in 1948 and since then the Israelis have continued to expand their bridgehead in the Arab world. This denial by the international community and the family of nations for over 44 years of basic human and peoples' rights are an injustice that cannot be justified nor maintained forever. Power politics cannot forever be counted on to deny a people's rights. The intifadah, now almost five years old, is succeeding in inspiring the people to develop a well-organized peaceful confrontation with the State of Israel. The rights of the Palestinians must be recognized by the new world order and aid must be given to establish the orderly development of the State of Palestine in the West Bank and Gaza, the very minimum acceptable to the people of Palestine.

Hopefully, the present peace negotiations will achieve a satisfactory solution to this major problem in the Middle East so that the people of the region, including the Palestinians, can lead a normal, productive life in peace and prosperity in the State of Palestine, among all their neighbours, including Israel.

Long live a free and independent Palestine.

LIAISON COMMITTEE OF DEVELOPMENT NGOs TO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the NGDOEC Liaison Committee would like to express its continuing support for the right of the Palestinian people to return to its homes and to enjoy self-determination.

Many of the European development NGOs, represented by the Liaison Committee, continue to be active with the Palestinian people, working to support its efforts to build a better life. The 1991 General Assembly of European NGDOs called on the European Community to promote a just settlement and the respect of international resolutions on Palestine, a call which we reaffirm.

We wish the International Day of Solidarity every success, and hope that justice for the Palestinian people will come before many more such anniversaries have passed.

MUSLIM WORLD LEAGUE

The Muslim World League has the pleasure of presenting its best wishes to the United Nations and hopes that the international Organization will succeed in supporting the right of nations to self-determination. It is known to all people that the problem of Palestine began with the intervention of the British in Palestine and their subsequent grant of a promise to the Jews — in the name of the British foreign minister — for establishing for them a national homeland on the territories of Palestine. And from then, there began the tragedy of the Palestinian people, who has a historical right on its land dating back to thousands of years. This right can only be denied by those who are really ignorant of it or those who deliberately intend to ignore it for proofs of this right are numerous.

The Palestinian people have been living in a tragic situation on its own land under Israeli occupation for more than 40 years. Palestinians have also been deprived of the fundamental rights which are recognized internationally. All that is taking place the world hears and sees. The Jews are trying to obliterate the Palestinian identity through falsification of historical facts and alteration of the features of the Palestinian civilization.

Moreover, the Jews deny the fact that there should be an identity for Palestinians like that of other nations. Despite the adoption by the United Nations of hundreds of resolutions that strongly condemned the Zionist entity, the whole world is still challenged by the said entity which defies the said resolutions and fails to comply with them.

Palestinians are looking forward to restoring their freedom on their land on which their ancestors lived and depend to a greater extent on the United Nations to help them despite their dissatisfaction with the role played by the United Nations in the adoption of partition resolutions of 1947 as well as that of 1948, recognizing the establishment of the Zionist entity on Palestinian territories. There is still opportunity for the United Nations to rectify its fault.

As all the nations of the world have witnessed the painful stages of the Palestinian issue as well as the challenges posed by the Zionist entity, the Muslim World League, which represents the Muslim nations in the world, sincerely hopes that the United Nations, which has now restored its due role in the resolutions of question of oppressed nations, will seriously consider the solution of this particular issue.

Wishing the United Nations every success in its new march.

SOVIET ANTI-ZIONIST COMMITTEE

The Soviet Anti-Zionist Committee expressed its deep gratitude and indebtedness to you for the consideration you have always shown it and for the very useful information you have sent regarding international efforts to protect the legal rights of the Arab people of Palestine and the peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Our participation in the work of the Fifth European Symposium and the Eighth International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, held at Vienna from 26 to 30 August 1991, gave us an excellent opportunity gain a deeper appreciation of the wide-ranging activities of a highly important section of the United Nations, to establish working relations with dozens of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from many countries, and to state the position of the Anti-Zionist Committee on a whole range of questions of principles.

Unfortunately, because of financial difficulties, we were unable to accept your invitation to participate in the Asian Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, held at Nicosia from 23 to 24 January 1992, and the Ninth International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, held at Vienna from 26 to 28 August 1992.

Our Committee is an NGO registered with the Ministry of Justice and operating within the framework of the Public Organizations Act. The Committee expresses the opinion of that section of the Jewish population of the country that considers Russia to be its historic homeland and is not inclined to link its destiny with the State of Israel.

From the time it was founded (April 1983) to the day it was disbanded (12 October 1992), the Committee was headed by Colonel-General David Dragunskiy, one of the outstanding representatives of the Jewish people, who was twice named "Hero of the Soviet Union".

Recently, the Zionists and their supporters in the executive branch sharply stepped up the pressure on the Committee. Paying lip service to democracy, freedom of speech and pluralism of opinion, the executive organs in Russia are virtually eliminating citizens' groups and NGOs that displease them.

On 6 October 1992, in violation of all regulations and laws in force in the country, the Mayor of Moscow, Yury Luzhkov, yielding to pressure from the Zionists, signed an order for the transfer of the premises (the headquarters of the Anti-Zionist Committee at No. 46 Frunzenskaya Naberezhnaya) leased to us by one of the militant pro-Zionist groups. That political move is a gross violation of the Public Organizations Act and other laws and ordinances governing the rental of premises.

At a time when laws are being broken all over the country and "revolutionary expediency" prevails, it is difficult for us to count on the objectivity of the law enforcement agencies. The purpose of depriving us of our operational premises, which we must vacate by 1 January 1993, as planned by the "organizers" of this unlawful act, is to liquidate the Anti-Zionist Committee.

We assure you, however, that nothing and nobody will force us to deny our convictions or turn away from the established goals of the Committee.

We again convey to you our heartfelt gratitude for your cooperation over the years and for your moral support. We wish you every success in your noble undertaking.

UNION GÉNÉRALE TUNISIENNE DU TRAVAIL

On this same day each year, the Union générale tunisienne du travail salutes the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Every since the day on which this people was driven out and expelled from its home by oppression and aggression at the violent hands of the oppressor forces of iniquity and the might of oppressive colonialism, it has been living a tragedy absolutely unprecedented in history, in which an entire people is experiencing the utmost suffering.

The Zionist gangs were able to infiltrate viciously into the various influential parts of the world and centres of decision-making and pressure and dominated them completely, becoming entrenched there and steering them in accordance with their interests, their ambitions, their racial sicknesses and their political complexes, with a view to usurping Palestine, the eternally Arab territory, in order to make it a homeland for the Jewish diaspora which had never, throughout the ages, had a homeland and which had never, throughout the world, found anything nobler or more generous than Arab tolerance.

Colonialism fulfilled its promise by detaching a portion of the Arab homeland as the site for the establishment of the racist State of Israel. Since that date, the defenceless Palestinian Arab people has been fighting heroically with all its strength, patience and self-sacrifice in order to regain its usurped right by the power of steel and bullets and with the slogan "Right over might", for right most certainly wins in the end.

Since that date, the Palestinian Arab people has been defending itself against the violations of the Zionist occupation troops, who without compunction trample underfoot all values and covenants. It struggles to defend itself from the bullets and bayonets of the Zionists. It struggles to defend the children whom the army occupation makes the target of its lethal weapons. It struggles to defend the homes exposed to Zionists' bulldozers and the unceasing acts of demolition. It struggles to defend its identity and the geography of the land. But, in spite of everything, Palestine will remain Palestine.

Ever since that date, the Palestinian Arab people has been struggling to defend its historic aspiration to liberate itself, to achieve peace and to establish a safe and democratic area, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, wherein minorities coexist with dignity and guaranteed rights. For all this, it daily presents commendable examples of patience, dedication and self-sacrifice and illuminates the path towards the achievement of the will of peoples struggling for the freedom that we, as peoples, all venerate.

The free world that believes in the values of freedom, democracy and justice and that is struggling for human rights and the establishment of world peace is called upon today, while there is still time, to make its active presence felt on the Palestinian arena and to realize in depth the magnitude of the tragedy of this newly awakened people and the limitless suffering inflicted by expansionist settler colonialism greedily encroaching on Arab territory with a view to absorbing it, whether in the West Bank or in the Gaza Strip, in the south or in the Golan, indifferent to and heedless of the resolutions of international bodies and world organizations and seeking either to gain time or to establish a fait accompli.

The international conscience is called upon today to speak up in condemnation of all the inhumane practices of the Zionist occupation army — the murder, levelling and genocide of a whole people for the sake of a diaspora brought in from the various continents by various means of inducement and duplicity.

The free international press is called upon today to expose double-dealing in treatment and in the implementation of the resolutions of the international community, raise consciousness and to convince world public opinion regarding the part played by imperialist forces in causing these organizations to persist in applying double standards.

The vital forces of the free world generally and of the Arab world in particular are called upon to perform the paramount duty of supporting the intifadah in the occupied territory.

UGTT, the venerable trade-union organization which has struggled against colonialism, made enormous sacrifices and presented manifest examples of martyrdom and self-sacrifice, appreciates, through its long history of struggle, the extent of the suffering of peoples under alien domination and has been unremitting in support for them in all places, to the full extend of its capacity. This organization cannot fail to take the side or right, legitimacy and law. It supports the cause of the fraternal people of Palestine and calls upon all trade-union organizations to express this independence by speaking out to condemn the repugnant Zionist crimes, censure Zionist colonialism and endeavour to create further opportunities for solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinian Arab people until it achieves victory.

UNION OF PALESTINIAN AMERICAN WOMEN

The Union of Palestinian American Women (UPAW) and as a member of the North American Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine, which is affiliated with the United Nations, resoundingly echoes support for the courageously brave Palestinian people for its perseverance and steadfastness under the most horrendous and deplorable living conditions attributed to 25 years of Israeli occupation.

On this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, a day which the United Nations deemed as a necessary step toward the establishment of a Palestinian State and an international governing administration of Jerusalem, the adoption of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) on 29 November 1947, this resolution is viewed as a binding resolution that must be ensured by its implementation.

Since the beginning of the Middle East peace talks which began in October 1991, Palestinians living under Israeli occupation have not witnessed the end to Israeli settlement activity; abatement of human rights violations among them; and an escalation of human sufferings. Over 15,000 Palestinian women, children and men, between the ages of 12-60 years old are faced with imprisonment in Israeli jails because they desire the same cherished principles of human rights, justice, freedom and liberty, enjoyed by free democratic societies.

Today there are over 197 United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine that have been adopted but without implementation. Concomitantly, world leaders of great nations have an unwavering responsibility to protect and safeguard the universal human rights of women and children who are subjugated to consistent violations of these universal rights which should be adhered to under the Fourth Geneva Conventions, international and universal human rights laws.

The United Nations is the very core of the world's centre for peace and justice and is protector of all people of color. On this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, UPAW stands in solidarity with the Palestinian people and prays that with our deep commitment focused on ending over 25 years of Israeli occupation, that a new life of justice, freedom and liberty can be cherished by Palestinian generations that have known human suffering, dispossession and displacement for the last 44 years.

UPAW strongly urges the relevant United Nations bodies and intergovernmental organizations to exert its utmost powers in ensuring that the Palestinian people's aspirations for self-determination and Palestinian statehood become a reality.

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

The international office of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom greets the participants in the annual International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

We applaud their steadfastness; in particular we pay tribute to Palestinian women who struggle daily to maintain their families under the brutality of occupation.

We strongly oppose the illegal settlements on occupied lands. We support adherence to a single standard of international law and implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

We urge the international community to continue its efforts to support the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, its right to self-determination and independence as the only solution to a lasting peace and security in the Middle East .

IV. CLOSING STATEMENTS

H.E. Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

[Original: French]

On behalf of the entire Committee, I should like to express sincere appreciation to Heads of State or Government, Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Governments, the organizations that I have just listed and all participants for their constant efforts towards securing a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine and their steadfast support for the objectives and activities of the Committee.

The statements that we have heard and the messages of solidarity that we have received today demonstrate once again the determination of the international community to progress towards the establishment of peace in the Middle East through the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, based on United Nations resolutions. I can give an assurance that we, the members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, will spare no effort towards achieving these objectives.

Mr. Farouk Kaddoumi, Head of the Political Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization

[Original: Arabic]

At the conclusion of this observance, I should like to extend my deep thanks to Mr. Ganev, President of the General Assembly, to Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and to Mr. Erdös, President of the Security Council, for their participation in this meeting in commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

I should like also to express our appreciation and thanks to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, for your efforts on behalf of the Palestinian people and your endeavours to secure a just solution to the question of Palestine.

The appreciation of the Palestine Liberation Organization also goes to all friendly Heads of State and Government who sent messages of congratulation on this occasion. In this respect, I should like to pay a tribute to the important and historic role played by the United Nations in providing an atmosphere conducive to finding a solution to this problem and for the assistance extended to our Palestinian people in exile and in the occupied territories. We hope that these efforts will also be extended to an effective international protection for our Palestinian people in the occupied territories.

This international Organization will always remain the natural forum for dealing with this and other international questions. All oppressed peoples come to this Organization with their questions and problems because they consider the United Nations to be the only instrument capable of helping them to achieve their independence. The United Nations will remain the appropriate forum for dealing with the question of Palestine. It will remain the principal dynamic engine providing a context in which to address the Arab-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and the only frame of reference on which all efforts can be hung, particularly those made in the progress towards peace that began with the Madrid Conference last year.

We are hopeful that the United Nations will assume the role for which it was founded — that of establishing peace and security throughout the world and of helping oppressed peoples to break the shackles of oppression. The opportunity is ripe to do so, now that humanity is witnessing the end of cold-war conflicts throughout the world and the dawn of a new era.

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